A new work by Dr. G. S. Ghurye, the doyen of Indian sociologists, is always a major publishing event and an outstanding contribution to the subject dealt with. In *Indian Sadhus* he achieves an even greater distinction. It covers a vast field. It is a survey of the very origins of asceticism and its ramifications during the course of its development over four millennia, of the multitudinous sects and groups and the emergence of a new type of Sadhus, who are outside society yet work for it. The learned author has straightened out the tangled skein of controversy over various aspects of the subject without undue respect for persons yet with sympathetic understanding. Students of Indian social evolution have been hampered by lack of adequate material on the ascetic component of Indian civilization. This work, written with deep insight and vision, fills this gap and brings out the social significance of the ascetic type.

SHOUT
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INDIAN SADHUS

INDIAN SAGINUS

INDIAN SADHUS

By

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WITH THE COLLABORATION OF
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'There can be no great and complete culture without some element of asceticism in it, for asceticism means the self-denial and self-conquest by which man represses his lower impulses and rises to greater heights of his nature.'

Sri Aurobindo

(*The Foundations of Indian Culture*, p. 85.)

★

'If here, as elsewhere, we find much to admire and much to avoid, let us profit equally by both observations, and steer onwards into the future with that steadier course of men who keep every past landmark in view, and scan the whole horizon.'

G. G. Coulton

(*Five Centuries of Religion*, Vol. I, p. XXXII.)

★

'Those who tell us that asceticism is superfluous, that contemplation is perilous, and the precept "be perfect" means "make a success of life and attend if possible to the perishing moment," do not understand the high destiny of man.'

S. Radhakrishnan

(*Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 114.)

Preface

The book professes to present the rise, history, work and present organization of Hindu asceticism and ascetics. It is hoped that it will reveal to the reader a neglected chapter in Indian social history. Its inspiration is the writer's appreciation that in upholding two kinds of life as ideal types—one, that of the disinterested householder, and the other, of the ascetic or Sadhu—India has made a unique contribution to sociological thought and social practice. It may claim the attention of wider circle of the elite on this score.

Indian thought made some impression on a few European thinkers when Deussen presented to them his view of Vedanta about half a century ago. In the thirties of this century Albert Schweitzer's writing combined with other conditions turned a much larger volume of the European elite towards the Indian and Oriental ascetic ideal. The sign of the times was Spalding's institution of the Chair of Eastern Religions in the University of Oxford and S. Radhakrishnan's occupation of it. In his book *Civilization in East and West*, Spalding himself called for a serious study of eastern religious thought and for an integration of its spirit in the Western thought and practice. W. Macneile Dixon's Gifford Lectures for 1935-1937 are clearly a reaction to the growing situation. These lectures in the form of the book styled *The Human Situation* have caught imagination of the English-reading public. The book went into its seventh reprint by 1944. Dixon in charming style combats the theory of negation of life in favour of the prevailing positive attitude. In doing so, he has shown rather poor appreciation of the role and work of the monastic and ascetic orders of the West and the East. Sometimes his desire for positivism has resulted in misrepresentation of ascetic life and practices. If this book should fall into the hands of some of the European elite who have imbibed Dixon's statements and thought, my labour would be more than adequately paid for.

228158

I am thankful to the Syndicate of my University for the research grant which made possible the investigation the results of which are incorporated in this book.

Khar, Bombay 21. G. S. G.

12-12-53.

CONTENTS

	Preface	Page
1	Introductory	1
2	Ascetic Origins	12
3	Asceticism Comes of Age	41
4	Samnyāsis or Śaiva Ascetics	78
5	Dasanāmis or the Śankara School of Sādhus	92
6	Dasanāmi Nāgās or Militant Samnyāsis	110
7	Nāthapanthis or Kānphāṭā Jogis	128
8	Reformist Samnyāsis	159
9	Bairāgis or Vaishnava Sādhus	170
10	Catuhsampradāyi Nāgās or Militant Bairāgis	201
11	Reformist Bairāgis	212
12	Sādhus of Miscellaneous Sects	238
13	Conclusion	250
14	References	267
15	Bibliography	278
	INDEX	283

Introductory

ASCETICISM and monastic organization are two unique contributions which Indian civilization has made to the common stock of culture. Asceticism concerns the theory and practice of individual conduct. Monastic organization is a special aspect of social organization in general.

Asceticism is a whole complex of traits whose main content is formed by some kind of bodily mortification, religious discipline, and withdrawal from life both mentally and physically. Its essence lies in passivity as contrasted with activity and in renunciation as opposed to absorption in worldly life. Asceticism as an individual practice gets modified to some extent when it brings together more individuals than one. Two or three ascetics living together or moving together demonstrate that the ascetic ideal of complete withdrawal is already partially defeated. They begin to find some kind of habitation a necessity. This habitation forms a monastic centre. There emerge rules to regulate life at the centre. Monastic life leads to the endeavour of creating social organization peculiarly fitted for the ascetic life. Thus asceticism leading in its growth to monastic life creates the paradoxical phenomenon of social organization for those who not only negatived but also renounced social connections and individual wants.

Asceticism as characterized above was practised neither by the ancient Egyptians nor by the Babylonians. Iranian civilization inveighed against it. In India, as will be seen in the sequel, 'muni's or ascetics seem to have been a component of its earliest

culture. They were even the favourites of the mighty god Indra. Indian cultural tradition has always looked up to and almost idolized a number of life-long celibates renowned for their self-control and spiritual development. It is both interesting and instructive to note that the traditional list of the great life-long celibate ascetics stops with two persons who must have lived about the end of the 9th century B. C. to about the middle of the 8th century B. C. They are Śvetaketu and Ṛṣabha. Śvetaketu is very well known for his philosophical contributions; and Ṛṣabha seems to have started the school of thought, ascetic and lay, which in the hands of Mahāvīra culminated in what is known as Jainism.

The theory of the four 'āśrama's or stages of life, which has characterized Hindu thought eversince, seems to have crystallized into a regular system sometime before Buddha and Mahāvīra. According to the 'āśrama' theory every Hindu male is expected to devote the latter half of his life to religious pursuits leading to and ending in complete renunciation. The third stage of life may be described as qualified asceticism of social significance. It is the life of the hermit who may have his wife with him. Both of them devote themselves to the practice of austerities, the hermit himself, in addition, instructing those students who care to come under his tutelage. The last stage of life extends the content of asceticism. In it the hermit is turned into an individual abodeless mendicant wholly given to the practice of austerities. With this course of life alone can a Hindu secure his release from mundane life.

The ideal end is salvation, and the ideal type is a person who prepares himself by systematic study, enters into and lives the full life of a householder, retires to the hermitage to practise austerities and finally selflessly wanders about as a mendicant friar, wholly absorbed in bodily mortification and spiritual contemplation.

The scheme of life of four stages continued to be held up as the ordained type in Dharma literature upto a very late date; and even now Varṇāśramadharma, duties of caste and āśramas, is almost

another name for Hinduism. When the scheme of four-fold stages was evolving, an earnest philosophical quest occupied the best minds in the age of the Upaniṣads. Not only common people but even earnest and intelligent souls lived the lives of householders till the end. They did not think of the stages of hermithood and mendicancy. Some of them even advanced theoretical justification for their course of life. Naciketas is perhaps unique among all the Upaniṣadic personages. He is the only one who is represented as having confronted the god of Death and secured the highest philosophical knowledge from him. He was the brother of the famous Śvetaketu who was not only a Brahmavādin but a life-long celibate. After obtaining enlightenment from the god of Death, Naciketas, instead of renouncing the world, continued to carry on the entire duties of a householder's life. That a householder's life properly lived was an adequate spiritual preparation is an opinion voiced here and there in the Upaniṣads.

Bhagavadgītā lays down the philosophical basis for the householder's life being considered the most appropriate spiritual preparation for future life. Living the householder's life, doing all its ordained duties in the spirit of renunciation and in devotion to God, is proclaimed as the most desirable and proper form of life. A person living such a life is declared to be a Yogi. But he is not a yogi of the ordinary run. He is significantly called a 'niṣkāma-karmayogi', that is one who performs one's duties without any thought of consequences to oneself. Disinterested and dispassionate householder is thence an ideal type. In actual living, though not theoretically, it supplants the older type represented by the life of four stages. Some very telling dialogues in the *Mahābhārata* drive the lesson home. One may refer to the discourses of Dharma, the hunter-butcher (Vyādha) and of Tulādhāra, the Vaiśya. This ideal type was finally installed in its place by Rāma of the Ikṣvāku race by his life. It is well known that Rāma is not only looked upon as an incarnation of Vishnu but, in the company of his wife Sītā, he forms one of the most popular deities in Hinduism. It is

in keeping with this cultural development that one comes across only stray examples, numerically very insignificant indeed, of persons in the fourth stage of life. The life of four stages as an ideal type looms in the distant background and that of the disinterested householder completely fills the foreground.

The world at large knows Buddha, an illustrious son of India, to be the first important ascetic. It also knows that he proclaimed asceticism as the true and the only path of salvation. Mahāvīra, the illustrious son of India with whom is associated Jainism, was also an ascetic. He, too, had declared complete renunciation as the right and only norm of conduct. Both in Jainism and Buddhism, ascetic life as the only path of salvation has remained a cardinal point. But it is not known to the world at large that long before Mahāvīra and Buddha, there were Indians who were not only ascetics themselves but also ready to convince others that renunciation and withdrawal from the world was the only right conduct of life, who have been long enshrined in Indian tradition as spiritual personalities and benefactors of the human race. At least three or four of them are known to have been Upaniṣadic personages and thus referable to a time before 900 B. C. One of them, Sanatkumāra by name, already figures in one of the two oldest Upaniṣads as a person entitled to divine honours. Another, the much more popularly known Nārada, appears in the same Upaniṣad as the disciple of this Sanatkumāra, intent on receiving higher knowledge. The life-long celibates, 'naiṣṭhika brahmacāri's as they have been called, led a thoroughly mendicant life of renunciation, carrying enlightenment wherever they went. They were so idolized that three of them figure in one list or the other of God Vishnu's incarnations. And one of them, Dattātreya, is actually installed as Deity and receives regular worship in some parts of India.

The life of renunciation and withdrawal led by the life-long celibates, Sanatkumāra and others, was not a mere aberrant way of life favoured by quixotic persons or cranks. That a student, on completion of his usual term of residence with his teacher, may not

relinquish his course of studies and return home to settle down as a householder but may continue to be a life-long celibate student is envisaged in an early Upaniṣad, not only as a possibility but also as an alternative pattern of life. In one of the two oldest of the Upaniṣads it is very clearly stated that wise men of old, to follow their pursuit of search for the Absolute, relinquished all desires. In brief they took to a life of complete renunciation and withdrawal from the world.

In the Jābāla Upaniṣad, in which the life of four stages is for the first time distinctly laid down, there is an unequivocal assertion that one may take to the life of a mendicant the very day one feels detachment towards the world, may be from the householder's life or even from the studenthood stage. The life-long celibate leading the life of renunciation without ever entering that of a householder is an ancient type, which is here acclaimed as an ideal type side by side with the one that goes through the four stages of life. Later, when the ideal type of the disinterested householder supplanted that of the four stages of life, the life-long-celibate ascetic type continued to be recognized as an ideal type alternative to it.

Indian culture, non-Buddhist and non-Jain, may be said to be the only culture which has acclaimed two ideal types, either as alternatives or as complementaries, from very early in its history till to-day.

Buddha's main contribution to asceticism in general and Indian asceticism in particular is the organization of monastic order. The monk, who was only an ideal type, in his collective aspect of monastic order becomes an object of worship. The three refuges of Buddhism to which Buddhists offer self-surrender are Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Sangha meaning collection or gathering is the totality of monks or the Monastic Order.

The tradition of the individual ascetic mendicant had become so deeply rooted in Indian culture that though a number of ascetic

sects arose soon after Buddha's time, as their names indicate they were not organized in centres. Even so late as the beginning of the 7th century A. D., as we know from Hiuen Tsang's description of Northern India, the two Śaiva ascetic sects that were prominent at that time do not appear to have had distinct monastic centres comparable to the Buddhist 'vihāra's. The ascetics of the sects used to live in local temples. The first monastic organization of Hindu ascetics historically dates from the 8th or the 9th century A. D. when Śankarācarya accomplished his great work. He established four religious centres in four quarters of India, and either established or reorganized ten orders of Śaiva ascetics. These ten orders have each a distinct name whose significance and origin are shrouded in mystery. Every ascetic, thenceforward, had not only his ascetic name but had further a sort of a surname in the form of the name of his order. Thus asceticism under Śankarācārya's aegis took a further step in organizational technique.

The great significance of Buddhism for asceticism comes out in the history of that religion in China. The Chinese in their long pre-Buddhist history do not reveal the prevalence of ascetic practices. Both Kung Fu-tze and Lao-tze preached a life of duties in society and either directly or indirectly condemned that of renunciation. Buddhism had its hey-day in China during the Tang Dynasty but had reached there about the beginning of the Christian era. The School of Inwardness, as the Chinese designated what one would call the school of meditation, is said to have reached China by the sea route about A. D. 525. The founder of the school was a great Indian teacher known to the Chinese as Bodhidharma. Bodhidharma, who worked in China till his death in A. D. 535, exhorted his followers to practise self-submergence. Since then till about the beginning of the 9th century, it seems, not only did Buddhism spread but also monks grew in number and monasteries multiplied.

The year A. D. 844 is notable in Chinese history as the first

year of harsh persecution of foreign religion. The persecution was so severe that even Buddhism cowed under it. For a few centuries the rulers of China sought to put a stop to the multiplication of Buddhist monks and monasteries. Monasteries were often broken up and their estates confiscated. Buddhist statues of bronze were melted down to be turned into coins. The monks and nuns of the monasteries were often required to go back to civil life and earn their living. It was not till the year A. D. 1019 that Buddhism was granted full liberty again. The great influence which Buddhist thought and life wielded on the Chinese people can be gauged from the fact that in the very year of liberation upwards of 2,30,000 men and 15,000 women entered Buddhist cloisters. Succeeding emperors terrified at the situation returned to restrictive measures.[1]

Chinese culture, whether Buddhist or Taoist, came to accommodate the ascetic ideal type along with the ancestor-worshipping householder. But Chinese Buddhist asceticism does not seem to have developed either in the manner of indigenous Indian asceticism or in that of the Indian-inspired asceticism of Christian culture.

Besides Indian culture, Christian culture is the only one which has recognized asceticism as a legitimate mode of life. Christian asceticism is known to have begun in Egypt about the 3rd or the 4th century A. D., and is associated with St. Anthony. About the end of the 3rd century it is believed that Anthony's life as a solitary ascetic was brought to an end by a number of disciples gathering round him. St. Anthony thus becomes the father of Christian monasticism. It was this type of monastic life that prevailed in Egypt upto the middle of the 5th century A. D. All later Christian asceticism and monasticism is traceable to it. The earliest of the ascetic and monastic orders in Western Christianity was the work of St. Benedict about the beginning of the 6th century A. D. He "effected a permanently working adaptation of the monastic ideal and life to the conditions of Western races." The life to be led did not involve great austerity though it was self-

denying and hard. The whole day a monk was occupied with the public celebration of the canonical office, reading and work.[2]

For about 600 years, c. 550-c. 1150, in Italy and other European countries monastic life based on the code of St. Benedict was the only type of religious life. This monastic influence continued to dominate the Church until the emergence of the Universities and the foundation of the Orders of Mendicant Friars in the second half of the 12th century. The close connection in general between the Universities and Christianity is testified to by the fact that they established chairs in Theology which came to be held by mendicant friars. Even more significant than this general connection is the direct papal support given to the University of Paris as the centre of orthodox theological teaching. The fully developed University of Paris, by the middle of the 13th century, was divided into four Faculties, three of them being designated 'superior' and one 'inferior'. The three superior Faculties were those of Theology, Canon Law and Medicine, the inferior one being that of Arts. The close connection between the ascetic-monastic aspect of religion and university life is seen in the Fellowship system of the great Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

The Universities represented one aspect of the intellectual wave which was rather mixed, being both religious and non-religious. The other aspect was formed by the scholastic movement typically represented by mendicant friars.[3] The phenomenal spread of these mendicant friar orders shows clearly that they responded to all the new needs and ideas of the age, religious, intellectual, artistic and social. Monastic life before the rise of the mendicant friars was a self-contained unit. The monastery represented a community. No work done within it or by it, whether manual or intellectual, was directed to an end outside its walls. This is not to say that the monastery would not give relief to the people in the neighbourhood who asked for it, but that its primary concern was with itself and not with others. Only with the emer-

gence of a more complex society did there arise divisions and specializations in monastic life, of choir monks and lay brethren, of contemplative groups and of active ones. The sphere of work of the new Orders of Friars lay normally outside the convent. They established themselves in the poorest localities of the growing towns and thus brought religion to the outcasts of society. In doing so, they not only supplied a need which the then existing clergy did not satisfy, but also, by assimilating themselves to the conditions of the surrounding life, created a fraternal feeling in the hearts of the destitute.

The development that took place in Christian asceticism about a century before the founding of the Orders of Friars is even more interesting and instructive than the one in the sphere of work of the older monastic life outlined above. The challenge of Islam not only in the Holy Land but also in Spain brought into existence at least three Orders of monks, which either at their inception or in their early history became military and militant. The Knights Templars, an Order founded in A. D. 1119, was from the very outset military and militant. Its avowed purpose was to undertake the pious task of protecting the pilgrims who after the first Crusade flocked to the Holy Land and to Jerusalem in particular. Their membership was mostly ascetic, married people being admitted only exceptionally. The extent of their active participation in religious wars is indicated by the fact that their history is generally declared to be the same as the history of the Crusades. The Order of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John is perhaps a little earlier in origin but was regularised at about the same time as the Order of the Knights Templars. Its avowed purpose was to provide hospital and nursing service to the pilgrims who visited the Holy Land. The Knights soon found that their service to the pilgrims necessitated their taking up arms, and they became an agressive military force. From about A. D. 1137 they began to take active part in religious wars. And it is remarkable that when Saladin, the Sultan of Egypt, began his systematic conquest, it was

the members of the Hospitallers and other military Orders that alone gave him stiff resistance. The history of these militant Orders bears further resemblance to that of the Indian Sādhus in their mutual rivalry and fights. In 1254 the Hospitallers and the Templars actually fought on opposite sides.[4]

It is well known that the Protestant reformation of Christianity not only protested against asceticism but also led to the despoliation of the monasteries. Protestant Christianity having rejected ascetic and monastic life altogether has acclaimed only one ideal type, namely, that of the householder or, better yet, non-monkish. Catholic Christianity, however, has continued to own and encourage the monkish type in spite of various vicissitudes and difficulties. The vitality of the ascetic ideal type as an integral part of Catholic culture cannot be better demonstrated than by the fact that within twenty years of Martin Luther's burning of the papal bull of excommunication was founded the most significant and perhaps the latest of the regular ascetic Orders. And that is the Society of Jesus, popularly known as the Jesuits. It was founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola in 1539. The wide ramifications, both in the sphere of work and in the extent of territory, which this ascetic order has made, need not be entered into here. Their great significance is brought out by the fact that "The Jesuit has no home; the whole world is his parish. Mobility and cosmopolitanism are of the very essence of the Society."[5] Catholic Christian culture has continued to be served by two ideal types–the ascetic and the non-ascetic. The ascetic ideal type has exerted not only to spiritualize the other type but also to do selfless service in the cause of society.

The Christian ascetic ideal, which has now remained as an ideal of Catholic Christianity alone and whose development has been more or less parallel with that of Indian Sadhuism, was first developed in Egypt. Its Egyptian development was in its turn, as observed by Flinders-Petrie and Rev. G. A. Frank Knight, inspired by Buddhist asceticism.[6] Flinders Petrie, the great Egyptologist, in his excavation of Memphis, the capital of ancient Egypt,

discovered in the Persian strata of that city pottery-heads and figures of Indian type along with Scythian and Tibetan ones. Pondering over Indian infiltration at Memphis through its Persian conquest, he observes: "The importance of the Indian colony in Memphis under the Persian Empire lies in its bearing on its importation of Indian thought, and the rise of the ascetic movement before Christ which culminated in Western monachicism." This influence of Indian culture, according to him, culminated in western monachicism through the medium of the "communal form of asceticism" which had already come into existence in Egypt by 340 B. C. Rev. Frank Knight further specifies the Indian influence as having been associated with Buddhism and having been disseminated throughout Egypt by the end of the 5th century B. C. Commenting on the significance of this influence he observes: "the consequences were remarkable. Monasteries, or groups of ascetic devotees living together in a communal form and ordering their lives on rules laid down by Indians, were established in Egypt by B. C. 340. It is in many ways probable that Greek Stoicism was not an indigenous Hellenic product, but merely infiltration via Egypt of beliefs derived from the Buddhist priests of India".

The development of the ideal types in Indian society forms a fascinating chapter in its history. Here the history of the ascetic ideal type, the Sādhu, alone is presented.

The ascetic ideal type began by renouncing the world and withdrawing from among fellow-brethren. It has slowly but surely developed into an ideal type whose main business in this world is twofold, self-realization and spiritualization of the lay brethren representing the older, and selfless social service the newer, feature. Provision for spiritualization and social service through the ascetic ideal type is a social experiment of high originality and great significance. As long as the urge to ascetic life continues to throb in a fair number of human hearts so long will the needs of the society, spiritual and social, receive selfless attention, and its members continue to be reminded of transcendental life.

Ascetic Origins *

ASCETICISM, which India through her Buddhism gave to the outside world, appears to have been an ancient complex of Indo-Aryan culture. Evidence for various traits of the complex can be traced back to the earliest literature. In the *Ṛgveda* both 'munis' and 'yatis' are referred to. The word 'muni', which occurs many times, regularly means some kind of ascetic. Indra is declared to be their friend. It should be noted that in later times 'muni' comes to be derived as a name for ascetics because of meditation ('mananāt'). In one passage of the *Ṛgveda* (X, 136, 2), these 'munis' are described as 'vātaraśana, keśin', and as wearing yellow and soiled garments. There is no controversy about 'keśin', which means long-haired. The group of persons called 'munis' in the *Ṛgveda* wore long hair and donned yellow and soiled garments. These attributes of long hair and yellow soiled garments are typical of ascetics in the full-fledged system of asceticism. The expression 'vātaraśana' is taken by modern scholars to mean naked, 'one having only the wind or air for his waist-girdle'. If this were uncontested, unanimous, and traditionally supported, no doubt could have been entertained about the existence of naked ascetics in Ṛgvedic times and their designation as 'munis'. But Sāyaṇācārya, our authority for the traditional interpretation of the Vedas, has taken the expression to mean 'son of one Vātaraśana'. In a later Vedic text, the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (II, 7) belonging to the *Yajurveda*, the same expression occurs in a much more precise context. Its straight forward render-

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* A slightly abridged and modified version of this chapter appeared as a paper under identical title in *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 2.

ing is: 'the Vātaraśana sages were Śramaṇas and ūrdhvamanthins.' It is clear from this passage that Sāyaṇācārya's interpretation of 'vātaraśana' in the Ṛgvedic passage will not properly fit. The term 'vātaraśana' must mean some kind of denomination as an adjectival qualification of the noun Ṛṣayah, sages. In another passage of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (I, 23), in a context, even more meaningful from the point of view of asceticism, the same expression occurs. There Prajāpati is declared to have practised penance and performed a kind of self-sacrifice. The sacrifice consisted in shaking his body after the practice of penance. The consequence is described to have been as follows: "From Prajāpati's flesh arose three kinds of Ṛṣis. They are Aruṇas, Ketus and Vātaraśanas. From his nails arose Vaikhānasas; and from his hair Vālakhilyas." Vaikhānasas are well known as one kind of ascetics. So are Vālakhilyas. The Vātaraśanas, who are described as one of the three kinds of Ṛṣis that arose from Prajāpati's flesh, must be considered to be another variety of ascetics, whose characteristics are described in the first passage we have quoted from the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*. In the second passage of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* the meaning of 'vātaraśana' given by Sāyaṇācārya will simply not do. Vātaraśana must be taken to be a group-denominational term. The denomination might well have come to be given to them as a periphrastic or euphemistic description of their naked condition. We may conclude that in the Ṛgvedic times there were people who went about naked or donned yellow and soiled garments and kept long hair. They were called 'munis'. We call them ascetics in conformity with later usage.

The fact that in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (II, 7) Ṛṣis are said to have existed in former times, who were not described, as a little later they came to be, as either 'Samnyāsins' or 'Parivrājakas' but as 'Śramaṇas', that is, 'those who were endeavouring', is significant. It should be noted that even in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, which cannot be much later than the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, at one

place (IV, 3, 22), occur the terms 'Sramaṇa' and 'Tāpasa'. The passage in question describes the nature of the high stage of perfection. It is a state in which a thief becomes a non-thief, a Cāṇḍāla a non-Cāṇḍāla, a Śramaṇa a non-Śramaṇa, a Tāpasa a non-Tāpasa and so on. Sāyaṇācārya explains the word Śramaṇa in this passage to mean Parivrājaka, ascetic, that is one who has entered the fourth of the four regular 'āśramas'. He takes the term 'tāpasa' to stand for 'vānaprastha', the third of the four 'āśramas'. 'Tāpasa' means one who practises austerities. And there is no doubt that when the full theory of the four āśramas came to be developed, austerities came to be prescribed for a person in the third āśrama, though he was called Vānaprastha. In later Upaniṣads, where the Aśrama theory is given, the term Śramaṇa is conspicuous by its absence. After Buddha, it came to be monopolised by the Buddhists so that the compound expression Śramaṇa-Brāhmaṇa became the current one to denote the two opposing religious systems of the Buddhists and the Brahmins. D. R. Bhandarkar's [3] failure to take into account these early passages where the word 'Śramana' occurs has led him to the wrong conclusion that the Śramaṇa's "were an un-Brahmanised non-Vedic sect of recluses."

The other qualification of the 'vātaraśana' sages in the first passage quoted is 'urdhvamanthino', Sāyaṇācārya renders 'ūrdhvamanthin' as 'ūrdhvaretas', that is 'one whose semen is drawn up', hence chaste. This would mean that the 'vātaraśana' sages refrained from sexual life and kept themselves chaste. It is possible to take the expression to mean 'one whose penis is erect or tumescent'. It is an achievement in Yogic practices for a man to be able to keep his organ of generation erect and yet to feel no sexual sensations. D. R. Bhandarkar [4] has drawn pointed attention to the fact that Śiva in the form of Lakulīśa, which form is the tutelary deity of the Pāśupata sect, is portrayed 'with his organ upraised'. He points out the further interesting fact that among the numerous names of Śiva occurring in *Mahābhārata* (XIII, 17, 46) one is 'ūrdhvaliṅga', one with erect organ. He notes that this representation of Śiva is,

almost without exception, to be met with in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa until the 13th Century A. D. Bhandarkar points out that in a passage of the *Pancaviṁśa-Brāhmaṇa*, one class of Vrātyas is designated Śama-nīcameḍhra, those whose medhra, penis, hangs low through control of passion'. In contrast with this expression would stand the expression, 'ūrdhva-meḍhra'. Bhandarkar finds the representation of the Urdhva-meḍhra god on one of the seal-amulets discovered at Mohen-jo-daro, a centre of the Indus valley civilization. He [5] observes about it: "The god shown on the seal illustrated in Plate XII, 17 is doubtless a prototype of the historic Śiva, because he is three-faced, seated in an attitude of yoga, and with Urdhva-medhra clearly exhibited." The description of one class of Vrātyas in the *Pañcaviṁsa-Brāhmaṇa*, which cannot be very much distant in time from the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, as of reposing penis combined with the almost common representation of Śiva in Eastern India with tumescent penis inclines us to the conclusion that the description of the 'vātaraśana' sages as 'ūrdhvamanthino' refers to their characteristic achievement of keeping their penis tumescent without agitation or excitement.

If the argument presented above is valid, it follows that in the Ṛgvedic times there were not only ascetics who were known as 'munis', but also others who went about naked, exhibiting their great yogic achievement of keeping the penis in tumescent condition without feeling and showing any excitement.

We will have occasion to refer to a holocaust of ascetics and pilgrims by the Tartar Timur and to mutual carnage by ascetics. In view of this, a story in the *Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa* (XIV, 4, 7) which states that Indra restored to life Vaikhānasas, who as we have stated above were one class of ascetics, who had been killed by Asuras, gains in significance. This happened at a place significantly called 'muni-maraṇa', the death spot of munis. [6]

The other group of people mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* is the 'yatis'. If 'muni' means one who meditates or reflects 'yati' is one

who is controlled. The word can be derived in a straightforward manner from the Sanskrit root 'yam' and also perhaps from 'yat'. The root 'yam' means to control and gives us the noun 'yama' meaning control, which is the first among the eight elements of standard yoga. If the word 'yati' is derived from the root 'yat', it would mean one who is a striver and would be equivalent of 'āśramin'. In later literature 'yati' always means a person in the last of the four Āśramas, a Samnyāsi.

In early Vedic literature[7] 'yatis' are represented as having incurred the wrath of Indra. Indra not only killed some of them but delivered others to be devoured by jackals. He relented in the case of some of them and bestowed favours. While 'yatis' on the whole are characterized as of evil or low speech and as worshippers of the male organ, individuals like Rāyovāja, Pṛthuraśmi and Bṛhadgiri from among them are singled out for specific mention. From this description it is clear there was a fair amount of consensus of opinion among scholars that 'yatis' represented a community which was not wholly un-Vedic in culture, but had developed a few special traits which did not meet with the approval of the orthodox community.

With the discovery of the Indus valley civilization and its critical study, there came about a change in the opinion about 'yatis'. Ramaprasad Chanda[8] propounded the view that the Indus valley civilization cultivated 'yoga' and meditative technique along with its cult of Śiva as Paśupati and Yogi. Ascetic and Yogic cult was in his opinion a contribution of the Indus valley civilization. The Yatis, hated by the Indo-Aryans and persecuted by their fighting god Indra, were none but the natives of India following the Indus valley culture. Asceticism and Yogic practices were, Chanda affirmed, non-Indo-Aryan in origin. D. R. Bhandarkar[9] distinguished the 'yatis' from the 'munis' and considered the former as Asuras and the latter as Aryans of the Indra cult. P. V. Kane's[10] considered opinion is not far different.

He observes: "It appears that even in the times of the Ṛgveda, persons who led a life of poverty, contemplation and mortification were known, and were honoured as Munis while persons corresponding to them among non-Vedic people were probably called Yatis." We do not feel convinced by any of these arguments, nor do we see any need to look upon 'yatis', whose very name is derivable from a good Sanskrit root, as of non-Aryan origin. Yatis in the company of Bhṛgu figure in a friendly relation to India.[11] The Ṛgvedic Indo-Aryans had developed among them a class of ascetics who were not only naked and credited with miraculous powers, but were also, as we have tried to establish, in the habit of demonstrating their achievement of power in holding their penis in tumescence without excitement. There is no reason to think that they might not have had another class of ascetics who made the male organ their object of worship. And they were the 'yatis'.

Asceticism is a complex of a number of traits. The principal ones may be distinguished as celibacy, austerity, concentration and ecstasy. To take the last first, it should be noted that the Vedic Aryans were fond of an intoxicating drink called Soma, which they quaffed in fair quantities on sacrificial occasions. The Soma drink sometimes used to make them so intoxicated and in a way blissful, that they could describe themselves as having become immortal and as having discovered the gods.[12] In some passages (*R. V.*, X, 136; VII, 56, 8) the 'muni' is described as having the 'mauneya unmāda', Muni's intoxication. We can better describe it as his ecstatic trance. During its continuance the 'muni' is described as having attained the fellowship of the deities of the air and as being able to travel with them in their course because of his miraculous powers. The following observation of Albert Schweitzer[13] brings out the significance of Ṛgvedic passages like the one referred to above for the history and development of asceticism. "In these hymns we encounter men who know they are uplifted above this world. They are the Shamans and medicine men – later called Yogins – who get themselves into a state of ecstasy through drinking the intoxicating

Soma, through mortification of the flesh and by self-hypnosis. Thus possessed, they regard themselves as beings into whom the gods have entered, and believe themselves in possession of super-natural powers. This consciousness of being uplifted above the world which is experienced in ecstasy is the condition determining Indian world and life negation (Samnyasa)..... They regard this state of being uplifted above the world as something that only came under consideration for themselves because they possessed the capacity of attaining to community with the gods."

In view of Schweitzer's observation about the ecstasy of Ṛgvedic 'munis', it is very significant to find in one of the early Upaniṣads[14] the supreme soul identified with 'rasa', juice or flavour. As the supreme soul is juice or flavour and as drinking of juice produces bliss or ecstasy (ānanda) so the realization of supreme soul is attended by blissful ecstasy. Here the juice is not specified, but the analogy is evidently based on the intoxication produced by drinking of Soma, which, as we have stated above, was a current ritualistic practice. In another place there is the famous text of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II, 4): "One experiencing the ecstatic bliss of Brahma-realization is never afraid". In the same Upaniṣad (III, 6) Brahma is identified with 'Ānanda' and this discovery is spoken of as the knowledge gained by Bhṛgu of the Varuṇa family. In the same Upaniṣad, in another passage (II, 8), the greatness of the bliss of Brahma-realization is brought out by quantitative comparison with other kinds of bliss beginning with the ordinary joy of human beings. The greatness of the bliss of Brahma-realization in terms of the joy of ordinary human beings is of the order of thousand thousand million times. The same valuation is also given in the older text, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (IV, 3, 33). In a passage of the *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* (II, 6) the state of sense control (Indriyadhāraṇā) or yoga is described as that stable condition of the mind which is super-sensuous. In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (II), which is considered to be the latest among the early ones, and where more or less full instructions about Yogic

technique are given and the consequent power-achievement is described, the result of such mental state is described as preparation for union with Brahma.

The second element of the ascetic complex is austerity, 'tapas'. 'Tapas' etymologically means heat and significantly its practice is described in Sanskrit in terms of the root 'tap', to get heated. In Vedic cosmogony 'tapas' plays an important role and in Ṛgvedic passages it figures in connection with the creative activity of Prajāpati as well as a power by itself. Through 'tapas', asserts a Ṛgvedic verse, a poet can behold the old creations of the fathers.[15] In the *Atharvaveda* (XV, 1, 3; 3, 1) Ekavrātya, as Mahādeva and Iśāna, is connected with 'tapas', and one of the varieties of his 'tapas' is specified in his description that he stood erect for a whole year. In the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* (II, 23) three factors of Dharma are specified. Yajna or sacrifice is the first of them. Yajna is here identified with 'tapas'. The more ancient religious category is seen here to give place to the newer category of 'tapas', austerity, as in the endeavour of Brahma-realization the latter has greater pertinence than the former. In the same Upaniṣad (VIII 5), in another context where Brahmacarya, life-long celibacy is propounded, at least two kinds of practices of austerity are specified and identified with Brahmacarya. It is asserted that what is known as 'mauna', silence, is Brahmacarya itself. Keeping silence is well known to be one kind of austerity. Brahmacarya is further identified with 'anāśakāyana', practice of non-eating. Fasting is thus another kind of austerity. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (IV, 4, 22) it is stated that Brahmins desired to know the Brahman in accordance with the Veda injunctions through sacrifice, through alms and gifts, and through the austerity of fasting (tapasā anāśakena). Knowing him one becomes a 'muni'. In the *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* (I, 3, 1) Brahmavids, knowers of Brahma, are qualified as 'Pancāgnayah' and 'Triṇāciketāh'. 'Pancāgnayah' are well known as those who practise the austerity of keeping round them five

fires; and 'Triṇāciketāh' mean those who keep a particular Yajurvedic vow.[16]

The *Prasna Upaniṣad* (I, 1, 2, 4, 9) informs its readers that Prajāpati desiring to have progeny practised austerity and thus produced a couple. When some half a dozen sages approached the great Pippalāda with a desire to know Brahma, he asked them to stay with him for a year having faith, keeping celibate and practising austerity (tapas). Self-realization is achieved, the same Upaniṣad declares, through austerity (tapas), celibacy, faith and knowledge (vidyā). The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I, 1, 8-9) states that Brahma is nurtured by austerity (tapas) and yet asserts that for the real knower knowledge alone is austerity. This Upaniṣad (I, 2, 11; II, 1, 7) already recognizes the fourth Āśrama, without naming it as such, and there is no wonder that though knowledge (jnāna) is the most important for Brahma-realization, yet not only the moral qualities of truth and faith, but even the physical attributes of celibacy and austerity, accompanied by living in a forest and by alms-begging, are applauded and almost prescribed as the way to final salvation in immortality. The practitioners of this regimen are naturally described as wise and calm (śānta) men. Further (III, 1, 5) self-realization is declared as experienced through correct knowledge and through celibacy (Brahmacarya). The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II, 6) declares that Prajāpati achieved his desire to be manifold through progeny by practising austerity. In the same Upaniṣad (III, 1–5) it is stated that when Bhṛgu, the Vāruṇi, approached his father Varuṇa for the knowledge of Brahma, the latter asked him over and over again to practice austerity. And it was through the practice of austerity that Bhṛgu finally came to realize that Brahma was ecstatic bliss (ānanda). The *Śvetāśvetara Upaniṣad* (VI, 21), in which perhaps for the first time personal God figures, it is declared that Śvetāśvatara came to know Brahma through the power of his austerities (tapas) and the grace of God. In the later *Maitrī Upaniṣad* (IV, 3), the practice of austerity is given a fixed and definite place as a stage in the

upward spiritual march of the individual mind. Through austerities mind acquires that right attitude (satva) which enables it later to realize the self.

However strong the claim of 'tapas' or austerity was in the technique of self-realization, in the active ponderings about impermanence and permanence and moral questionings which characterized the Upaniṣadic age, it would have been surprising if doubts about the efficacy of austerity, that is, of the test of physical endurance and bodily mortification, were not expressed. The *Bṛhadarāṇyaka Upaniṣad* (III, 8, 10) proclaims disbelief in austerity and its futility for Brahma-realization through the most authoritative person of the age, Yājnavalkya himself. He tells his favourite wife Gārgī on the eve of his departure to a hermitage in forest, that if a person practises penance for many thousands of years without knowing the Immutable (Brahma), he would have achieved not the Infinite but only something that is finite and ephemeral. Even the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*[17], in which not only 'tapas' but 'Brahmacarya' and 'Satya' as well, and even the performance of prescribed activity, are considered as competent and effective techniques for Brahma-realization, subordinates austerity as a method of realizing Brahma and declares 'jnāna', knowledge, to be superior.

It is next to impossible to determine how early in the history of Vedic culture yogic technique came to be formulated and practised. In the *Atharvaveda* (XV, 15, 1-2) Ekavrātya as Iśāna is described as having seven 'Prāṇa's seven 'Apāna's and seven 'Vyāna's. Prāṇa, Apāna and Vyāna are three kinds of breaths which along with seven others form the ten vital energies. They are located in particular arteries, which together form the subtle body according to the fully developed Yoga system. Of these, Prāṇa and Apāna are considered to be the most important. Prāṇāyāma or control of breath is an important purificatory process in the Yoga system. As Danielou[18] observes: "The real technique of Yoga begins with the control of ten vital energies (Prāṇas) and

rhythms, of which breathing is the most important." Its importance is already stressed in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (II, 8). The specification of not only the breaths but also of their number in the Atharvaveda inclines us to the view that some kind of breath-control was known and practised in the early Vedic period.

In substantiation of our opinion we may refer to the detailed and technical knowledge of 'nāḍi's, arteries, which peeps out here and there in the oldest of the Upaniṣads, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (IV, 3, 20; IV, 1, 3). The 'Hitā' arteries in thousands starting from the heart are mentioned, and one that proceeds upright from the heart is specifically described as 'asṛtih sancariṇī'. The *Chāndogya* (III, 13, 1–6) goes further and enumerates five 'Prāṇa's designating them as 'Devasūṣi'. The five Prāṇās named are Prāṇa, Vyāna, Apāna, Samāna and Udāna. They are located in specific parts of the body. 'Prāṇa' is identified with 'cakṣu', eyes; 'Vyana' with ears, 'Apāna' with speech; 'Samāna' with mind, and 'Udāna' with ether. They are described as five 'brahmapuruṣa's who are the doorkeepers of the gates of heaven. To understand the significance of these is declared to be an important achievement leading to the birth of a brave son in the family and the acquisition of place in heaven for oneself. The same work (VIII, 6, 6) specifies the number of 'nāḍi's proceeding from the heart as 101 and singles out the one, which proceeds upwards to the head, as the most important. For the soul leaving the body through this artery never returns. The *Praśna Upaniṣad* (I, 3, 3-12), too, refers to the Prāṇas, and stresses the importance of knowing their origin, varieties, places and powers. Prāṇa, the lord of them, himself occupies the eyes, the ears, the nose and the mouth and sends Samāna to occupy the centre, ascribing the anus and the genitals to Apāna. Vyāna is relegated to the thousands of arteries that proceed from the heart and Udāna is made to occupy one of the arteries which goes up. This is the Yogic system. It is not mentioned by name here nor in the other place (II, 6, 16) where, as in the *Chāndogya* to which we have already referred, it is clearly

stated that the arteries of the heart are 101 in number, that one of them penetrates to the head and that the soul leaving the body through it never returns. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (I, 6, 1) opens up an even more esoteric aspect of bodily structure assumed in the Yogic system. It refers to the fleshy lump attached to the palate and hanging like an udder from it. It is evidently the uvula. It is there designated 'Indrayoni'. Here the hair are supposed to part. In the Yoga system, the 'Suṣumnā nāḍi', the coronal artery, is believed to terminate at the place of hair-end and therefore at this fleshy lump. With so much technical anatomical scheme of the Yoga system actually referred to in these older Upaniṣads the inference that the practice of Yoga in the pursuit of spiritual life was not uncommon in that age can be validly made.

And in this case we need not depend only on inference however valid. There are direct references to yoga itself. In the *Chāndogya* (VII, 6), the great Sanatkumāra instructing Nārada identifies Brahma with various mental categories in succession, each later being higher than the preceding one. After 'Citta', mind, 'Dhyāna', meditation, comes in for identification with Brahma. 'Dhyāna' is the last but one element in the complete Yoga-system. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I, 3, 3–6) control of senses is not only exhorted but insisted on and it is laid down that the senses can be kept under control only through a mind which is 'yukta', applied, or yoga-conditioned. If the Chāndogya identifies Brahma ās Dhyāna and gives up this identification in favour of Vijnāna, knowledge, the *Kaṭha* (II, 6, 10-11) speaks of the steady and the controlled state of the senses, mind and intellect as the highest condition, and appropriately describes it as Indriyadhāraṇā. In the complete Yoga-system, 'dhāraṇā' or continued concentration is the final state. As if to dispel all possible doubt about what this 'Indriyadhāraṇā might be, the text specifies it as Yoga. Here then we have Yoga in theUpaniṣads in its full-fledged form. We know that its final stage is the same as in later times. Only we do not know whether the elements, 'Aṅga's or stages were recognized to be

six or eight. But Yoga was considered to be so important that the whole system discoursed in the *Kaṭha* (II, 6, 18) is finally summarised as both knowledge and 'yogavidhi'. *Śvetāśvatara* (II, 8–14), the latest of the early Upaniṣads, gives almost detailed instructions for the practice of Yoga and clearly defines and describes the miraculous physical powers as well as the spiritual effulgence that result from its practice.

We may conclude from our discussion that Yoga in its more or less developed form was not only known but was enjoined to be practised as a necessary element in one's spiritual endeavour. Even some of the esoteric aspects of what later came to be known as Haṭhayoga, like the importance of the coronal artery (suṣumnā) were also known and their role in the spiritual endeavour was appreciated.

Celibacy is another trait of the complex of asceticism. Asceticism, in general, has expected and even insisted that its aspirants should take to it before they have tasted sex in ordinary course and settled down as married men and women.

It is only in Indian civilization, which is undoubtedly the mother of asceticism and of monastic order, that asceticism is laid down as the last stage in an individual's life. The poet Kalidāsa in *Raghuvaṁśa* (I, 8) has lovingly described the characteristic family customs of his favourite dynasty of the Ikṣvākus of Ayodhya. Their glory was that the male scions of the family devoted the pre-adult part of their life to the acquisition of knowledge and the middle part of it to the pursuits of sensuous pleasures. They resorted to the life of a hermit in their old age, and in the final stage practised Yoga as a preparation for leaving the material body. The individual life according to the pattern of Indian civilization was thus intended to be wholly lived, contrary to the general notion that it not only encouraged but idealized world-negation and life-renunciation. This theory, of course, is fully established and can be taken to be the ideal since the time the Āśramas

or the stages of individual life came to be fixed as four. It is known that Vedic religion could not have contemplated these four stages. And it is held by many scholars[19] that the fourth stage of Samnyāsa or asceticism came to be formulated and recognized fairly late in the history of Indian civilization.

Before 1920 or thereabouts many scholars were disposed to look upon the addition of the fourth or the ascetic stage as post-Buddhistic. After the discovery of the Indus valley civilization there has been a tendency to look upon asceticism as a borrowing by Indian civilization and a loan from the culture that existed in India before the incoming of the Aryans.[20] We have so far led evidence to show that not only the separate traits but also the whole complex of asceticism, even including celibacy, were current too early in the history of Indian civilization for these to have been taken up from pre-existing culture or cultures. The names of the various traits as well as of the complex are thoroughly Sanskritic in origin and in all other aspects.

Celibacy, however, as a trait of the ascetic complex cannot form a rational and cogent element in the theory of four Āśramas. Asceticism or Samnyāsa is entered into not only after sex is satisfied but also after its urge has subsided. The question of celibacy in the Samnyāsa Āśrama or the fourth stage has no practical significance. It is only when ascetic life is undertaken in youthful years, whether one is married or unmarried, that the problem of celibacy assumes practical significance.

Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, the first historical personage to have renounced the worldly life in pursuit of spiritual endeavour, was a Naiṣṭhika Brahmacāri. He took to ascetic life without ever becoming a householder. Buddha, the second historical personage to renounce the world and to take to ascetic life, did so sometime after a son was born to him. Of course he was in the prime of his life. Incidents one after another in the social surroundings distress-

ed him and he left his house to seek knowledge. Having gained that knowledge he came to the conclusion that the problem of human life and misery could be solved only by renunciation. Asceticism became with him the only way of salvation. The ideal type of Buddhist thought was thus the ascetic, the 'Bhikku'. Buddha's teaching appealed to a succession of generations in India. And Buddha became not only the second historical personage to renounce the world but the first historical founder of the monastic order. The three refuges, or 'Śaraṇa's as they are called, of Buddhist thought, are the Buddha himself, the Dhamma, that is, the path of righteousness that he promulgated, and the Saṅgha, that is, the monastic order. As the Bhikku was the ideal type, the collection of such Bhikkus and Bhikkunis naturally became one of the corner-stones of Buddhism.

Could other Indians, who were contemporaries of Buddha or those who lived in his immediate past, do as Buddha did, if they felt the urge? It is not possible to answer the question positively by quoting an illustrative example. The *Jābāla Upaniṣad* (4), which is, in all probability, post-Buddhist, unequivocally declares that one may renounce the world whenever one feels the urge, being imbued with detachment. It may be that one feels this urge during his studenthood (Brahmacarya). One may leave the worldly life then. One may live through the other two stages of life and renounce the world after dwelling in the forest. One may even take to renunciation straightway from one's house. This option might have either meant that there was no necessity to go through the third stage of life in order to take to the fourth or that one might proceed to the fourth stage anytime during the householder's stage, as Buddha did. On the whole, we are inclined to believe from general evidence that the last alternative would not have been appraised as the proper course. The greatest of the Brahmavādins of the Upaniṣadic age, Yājnavalkya, who figures in the *Bṛhadārānyakā Uphniṣad* (II, 4; IV, 5) so prominently, is introduced as renouncing the worldly life and taking to, what

would appear to be, the third stage of life of hermit-hood. On the eve of his doing so, he calls his two wives, Maitreyī and Kātyāyanī in order that he may divide the property between them. From the dialogues recorded twice with his wife Maitreyī, who is described as Brahmavādinī, it is clear that they were not young and that even the Brahmavādinī Maitreyī did not propose to accompany him.

As a matter of fact the earliest and the most sanctified renunciation to be found in Indian civilization is what came to be known later as 'Naiṣṭhika Brahmacarya', confirmed or lifelong celibacy. The most philosophical and profoundly thought-provoking occasion that one can think of in the Upaniṣadic age is a discourse between Yājnavalkya and Janaka Vaideha. The discourse begins with the formal declaration and a serious avowal by Janaka that he approached Yājnavalkya as a student desiring to be instructed. Almost towards the end of the long discourse, during the course of which Yājnavalkya waxes more and more eloquent, he declares: "Him the Brahmins desire to know through sacrifice, through gifts, through austerity of fasting. Having known Him one becomes a Muni, sage, wise one. Desiring the same end, recluses renounce the world. For that very purpose wise men of old used not to desire progeny. For they thought to themselves, 'What shall we do with progeny if we do not realize Self.' With this thought they used to take to the life of mendicancy leaving behind the desire for progeny, the desire for wealth, the desire for the things of this world. There is, really speaking, only one desire; for what is the desire for son is the same as the desire for wealth and the latter is the same as the desire for worldly things." On another occasion, less formal and less serious, the same Yājnavalkya answering the question of Kahoḷa-Kauṣītakeya reiterates the same view almost in the same words, but drops the context of the ancients and makes the practice a consequence of knowledge rather than an instrument of it. He says: "Brahmins having known Him [we must understand this to mean having the knowledge

that to know Him one has to] practise the life of mendicants leaving behind.....Hence a Brahmin leaving aside learning should be like a child and even leave aside 'mauna', silence". [21]

As in the above passages of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Yājnavalkya proclaims that for Brahma-realization wise men straightway take to the life of mendicants, without becoming householders, as the right path for self-realization, it means that 'naiṣṭhika brahmacarya' or asceticism from before the time of sex-indulgence was looked upon as the proper course of spiritual endeavour. The *Chāndogya* (II, 23, 1), from our point of view, goes a step forward and actually mentions such 'brahmacarya' as not only one of the pillars of righteousness but as a state that ensures Brahma-realization. Only it does not call it by its later name of Naiṣṭhika Brahmacarya. It says, there are three elements of Dharma. They are sacrifice, study, and alms and gifts. The first of them is austerity. The second is represented by the student (Brahmacāri) living in the family of his preceptor. And the third, or the alms and gifts, is represented by the student who continues to live in the family of his preceptor till the end of his life. Here there is no doubt that the 'Naiṣṭhika Brahmacāri' is meant. If any doubt is entertained it should be dispelled by the following text of Manu (II, 243) on the subject. It runs, "If he (the student) should like to live in the family of his preceptor for life, he should continue to serve him with diligence till he leaves his body." The commentator Kullūka Bhaṭṭa has properly designated this kind of life as Naiṣṭhika Brahmacarya. In another passage of the same Upaniṣad, [22] sacrifice, the sacrificed, the 'Satrāyaṇa' or relay of sacrifices, silence, austerity of fasting, and retirement to forest are all one by one identified with Brahmacarya; and it is declared that self-realization brought about by Brahmacarya is not perishable.

In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I, 2, 15), the intrepid Naciketas succeeds by his importunity in getting a complete answer to his queries about the real nature of things from no less a personality

than the God of Death himself. It is stated in that discourse that Brahma is the reality that is thought of in the Vedas and spoken about in austerities. Desiring its realization people practise Brahmacarya. It is clear that Brahma-realization was the object of Brahmacarya. Brahmacarya in the context could not be the ordinary studenthood but must be taken to mean the Naiṣṭhika variety of it. The *Praśna*, (I, 9) on the other hand, speaks of austerities, faith and knowledge along with Brahmacarya as the accredited means of self-realization. The *Muṇḍaka* (III, 1, 5), too, combines Brahmacarya with other methods of self-realization. The complements in this case are austerities and knowledge, as previously. Only 'Śraddhā', faith, is replaced by truth, 'Satya'.

It should be clear from the foregoing discussion that, first of all, sacrifice came to be realized as inadequate for spiritual benefit. Austerity, 'Tapas', and its allies, the Yogic practices, were thought to be more efficacious than sacrifice in the search for Brahma. 'Brahmacarya', not only as an aspect of austerity but owing to its detachment from life, also as an opportunity for the persistent pursuit of knowledge, came to replace mere physical penance as a mode of spiritual endeavour. The need for moral qualities in this endeavour could not long remain undiscovered. In the last two passages quoted, we therefore find the moral qualities of faith and truth given equal weight along with austerity, knowledge and Brahmacarya. 'Naiṣṭhika Brahmacarya' thus is a fairly ancient institution, and the form of asceticism earliest known and practised.

It has been debated, as we have stated above, whether Samnyāsa, asceticism, as the fourth stage of life is at all ancient. Sharma [23] came to the conclusion that the first three Āśramas are ancient and that the fourth Āśrama came to be recognized to accommodate the dissenters, who had lost faith in sacrifice even before the rise of Buddhism. P. V. Kane [24] concludes that the fourth Āśrama, though later in origin than the other three, is pre-

Buddhist. He has drawn attention, like Sharma, to the expression 'atyāśramin' occurring in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI, 21). By implication all the four Āśramas may be taken to have been formulated before, though they are specifically named for the first time in the *Jābāla Upaniṣad* (4). In the *Muṇḍka Upaniṣad* (III, 2, 6), final salvation is declared to be achieved by 'yatis' of pure spirit, who have cultivated Vedānta knowledge and practised Samnyāsa. We may conclude that asceticism or Samnyāsa had come to be recognized as a necessary step in the endeavour of self-realization and that it had come to be treated as the fourth and final stage in the orthodox scheme of individual life.

It is not without significance that in the Puranic literature and popular Hinduism Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana, Sanatkumāra, Sanatsujāta and Nārada are enshrined as the immortal Brahmacāris who are always ready at hand to give appropriate advice, or as in the case of Nārada to bring about some healthy events through apparent bickerings. Śuka-Sanaka is a combination which is invariably invoked to introduce some salutary advice or some difficult piece of spiritual knowledge. The *Mahābhārata* and the *Skanda-Purāṇa* both declare Śuka to have been a Brahmacāri. It is in keeping with this tradition that the Vaishnava sect of Caraṇadāsis names itself Śuka sampradāya. Sanaka is a Vedic personality and his name occurs in the list of sages to whom libations are to be offered.[25] He is credited with having composed a book called *Sanakasaṁhitā*. He was a Brahmacāri of such repute and had gathered so much prestige round him that, as we shall see later, the earliest of the Vaishnava ascetic orders, that of the Nimbārkis, looks upon him as its founder and is named after him. Well might they do so; for Sanaka as Sanaga figures in the preceptorial succession given in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (II, 6, 3; IV, 6, 3). He is there represented as the disciple of Parameṣṭhin, who in his turn appears as the disciple of Brahma himself. Sanandana figures in the Purāṇas as the son of Brahmā

and as a Brahmacāri. Sanātana again is more or less a Vedic personality and figures in the preceptorial succession as the disciple of Sanaga. Both of them it is exhorted, should be given libations. Sanatsujāta figures only in the *Mahābhārata*, but in a context which lifts him above many ascetics and Brahmacāris. He has given guidance in spiritual matters to a succession of generations through his discourse figuring in the *Mahābhārata* as *Sanatsujātīya*.* As a philosophical text it is valued next to the *Bhagavadgītā*. Sanatkumāra does not figure in the preceptorial succession. That he was an important personage and a great Brahmacāri, significant in the history of spiritual knowledge, there is no doubt. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII, 1, 1; VII, 26, 2) Nārada is represented as having gone to Sanatkumāra for receiving instruction and as having discovered that what he knew till then was only technical and formal knowledge. In the end Sanatkumāra, and it should be noted that here he is given the title Bhagavān Lord, led him to that blissful knowledge which effects one's release from mundane life. Aśvaghoṣa in his *Buddhacarita* (II, 27) selects of all personalities Sanatkumāra to compare Buddha with. It is in the great tradition of these Naiṣṭhika Brahmacāris that Mahāvīra's life becomes intelligible. Only, Mahāvīra found it necessary to go one step away from the tradition in which he was brought up. The orthodox tradition appropriately makes a differential appraisal. In the list of Vishnu's incarnations given in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Sanatkumāra and Nārada form two of them.[26]

Whether there were parallels amongst the womankind of India, it is very difficult to say definitely. However in the personage of Gārgī Vācaknavī, who in the *Brhadāraṇyaka* (III, 6. 1; 8, 1) once heckled Yājnavalkya and second time got satisfied with his answers on abstruse philosophical matters, was not only a

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* This book along with the 'Bhagavadgita' was translated into English by K. T. Telang for the Sacred Books of the East Series.

Brahmavādinī but a 'Brahmacārinī', 'celibate', too. Significantly enough she is referred to through her patronymic Vācaknavī. It is also possible that some of those females who figure in the libations connected with Brahmayajna were 'Brahmacārinī's. Vaḍavā-Prātitheyi is one such. Another lady of ancient fame, known in Puranic literature by her patronymic of Śāṇḍilī, and significantly known otherwise as 'svayamprabhā', self-resplendent,is described as an ascetic practising austerities on mount Ṛṣabha on the eastern sea board.

The recognition of Samnyāsa as a regular stage of life or āśrama was itself an indication that not only was asceticism felt to be a necessary element in an individual's spiritual endeavour, but also that persons holding such faith had formed themselves into groups or schools. We know for a fact that a slightly junior contemporary of Mahāvīra, Maskarin, known in Buddhist and Jain literature as Mokkhali or Maṅkhali,[27] was the leader of an ascetic sect called Ājīvakas, who were bitterly opposed to Mahāvīra's sect. There is good reason to think that there were ascetic predecessors of Mahāvīra, at least some of whom have been cononized as Tīrthaṁkaras by Jains. According to Jain tradition, Mahāvīra himself was the twenty-fourth Tīrthaṁkara or prophet, and the first was one king Ṛṣabha who afterwards renounced his kingdom[28]. It is this Ṛṣabha, about whom the *Bhāgavata Purāṇā* (V, 3-6) gives a few details including his lineage. He was the son of Nābhi and Merudevī. He led a married life for some time and one of his sons was the famous Bharata. After some years he seems to have felt an urge for ascetic life, for he is described as having behaved like a madman, keeping stark naked. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (II, 7, 10) further states that he was initiated into asceticism directly as a Paramahamsa, the highest stage in asceticism. In the same Purāṇa, he figures as an incarnation of Vishnu.[29] If this tradition about Ṛṣabha's Paramahamsa-initiation may be accepted as correct, then the existence of the Paramahamsa order of asceticism is attested for a very ancient time. Allowing twenty

years for a generation, Ṛṣabha may be taken to have lived about 900 B. C. This would mean that at least the four principal orders of ascetics, namely, Kuṭīcaka, Bahūdaka, Hamsa and Paramahamsa, were in existence even in the time of the earliest of the Upaniṣads. The names of the first three orders of ascetics occur in the very late Upaniṣads, the *Bhikṣu* and the *Nārada-parivrājaka* [30] as well as in the *Mahābhārata* (Anusaśāna, 141, 89). The Paramahamsa order and some of the famous Paramahamsas, however, are mentioned in the *Jābāla Upaniṣad* which, though a later one, is not as late as the *Bhikṣu* and decidedly belongs to the pre-Christian era. Ṛṣabha does not figure in the list of Paramahamsas given either in *Jābāla Upaniṣad* or in the later ones. We may onclude that he was not considered to be a very great Paramahamsa by the composers of these Upaniṣadic lists.

Our argument is further strengthened by the fact that in the earliest list of noted Paramahamsas, the one occurring in the *Jābāla Upaniṣad*, figure two of the greatest philosophers, whose activities and discourses are either described or referred to in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* and even in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. They are Uddālaka Āruṇi and one of his famous sons, Śvetaketu. Śvetaketu was a contemporary of Yājnavalkya, the famous Upaniṣadic philosopher, and of the equally well-known philosopher-king of the Panchalas, Pravāhaṇa Jaivali. The family of Svetaketu is, in a way, very typical and, in a way, a very unique one even for the Upaniṣadic age. Śvetaketu was initiated into the highest knowledge through the realization of the Truth, 'Tattvamasi', by his father. It is to be noted that the full name of Śvetaketu is generally given as Śvetaketu Āruṇeya. Uddālaka, when Śvetaketu was twelve years old, asked him to search for some appropriate teacher in order that Śvetaketu may reside with him as a disciple, remarking: "No one, my dear, from our family has ever remained the wretch of a Brahmin through not having fully studied knowledge." Śvetaketu as a dutiful son, whose pride of family was kindled, resided with

a teacher for the whole period of twelve years. He returned home after having studied the Vedas, considering himself to be a thoroughly learned man. He stood silently in front of his father. The father asked him only one question and having discovered his ignorance gave him the knowledge we have referred to above.[31]

In the preceptorial succession given in the Upaniṣads, Śvetaketu is naturally represented as the disciple of Uddālaka. This remarkable personality figures in the *Mahābhārata* in the capacity of both a philosopher and a law-giver. It is Śvetaketu who introduced or tightened up the institution of marriage. Before his time wife-lending was a more or less recognized custom, perhaps among those who had turned anchorites. His moral conscience was roused when he found on one occasion his mother to be the victim of this custom. He forbade that custom from that time. He figures in a philosophical discourse which he carried on with one Suvarcalā, who was the daughter of one sage Devala. She is described as 'Brahmajnāni'; but as her philosophical questions were satisfactorily answered by Śvetaketu, she became his wife. It would have been very interesting to know something about the married life of this Brahma-knowing couple but unfortunately we get no information excepting the indirect one vouchsafed in the *Jābāla Upaniṣad* through Śvetaketu's being listed among the noted Paramahamsas. Śvetaketu must have taken to asceticism soon after his marriage.

Śvetaketu, as we have said, was only one of the sons of Uddālaka. At least one other equally famous son of Uddālaka is known from the Upaniṣads. He is Naciketas, a very remarkable personality even for the Upaniṣadic age. For Naciketas is represented in the *Taittirīya Bṛāhmaṇa* (III, 11, 8) and in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, which in its entirety is a discourse between Naciketas and the God of Death, as confronting the God of Death himself and importuning him for imperishable goods. One of the boons that he secured from the God of Death clearly demonstrates his attitude towards life and spiritual endeavour. The boon granted his desire

that the rites and duties laid down in the 'Śruti's and the 'Smṛti's, performed or to be performed by Naciketas, shall be imperishable. Naciketas, thus, was a great believer in and a strong supporter of the Vedic religion of rites and duties. He represents that school of Upaniṣadic thought which still staunchly believed in the ritualistic and sacerdotal activity of the Vedic religion. The Īśāvāsya *Upaniṣad* (1–2) declares its complete faith in the life-long performance of ritual duties, and guarantees freedom from the taint of such activity, and even the Chāndogya ends on a note of exhortation in favour of it. It lays down as Brahma's own injunction, handed down through Prajāpati and Manu, the following dictum: "Having studied the Veda with a preceptor, having properly completed discipleship and returned home, one should establish a household. On an appropriate spot one should carry on one's study and perform all the religious duties. If one controlling all his senses and not killing animal life except in the performance of religious rites, goes on till the end of life, one attains the 'Brahma Loka'. Such a one never, never returns." Small wonder then that Nacıketas does not figure among the prominent Paramahamsas. He could not have taken to asceticism at all.

Uddālaka Āruṇi, the father of these remarkable sons, is the other noted Paramahamsa figuring in the list of *Jābāla Upaniṣad.* According to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (III, 11, 4) though he was instructed in Brahma-knowledge by his father, the preceptorial line is traceable to Brahma himself. In the *Yogavāsiṣṭha,* it is stated that he always used to be in an ecstatic trance. Thus later tradition, though it does not speak of him as a Paramahamsa, knows him to have been one. Among the noble and inspiring tales of pupillary devotion and sense of duty enshrined in later tradition that of Āruṇi is perhaps the most remarkable. Āruṇi was living as a disciple in the hermitage of Dhaumya. His preceptor once asked him to go over his far off farm and stem the water that was flooding it. Āruṇi finding the task impossible with the means at his disposal laid himself down in the breach

and withheld the flow of the water. It was very late before Dhaumya thought of his disciple and his errand and was very pleased when he discovered him in the situation. It was after this incident that Āruṇi, who was a Panchala, came to be known as Uddālaka.

Here we should like to refer to the Puranic tradition about Dhaumya and his family, so instructive in our quest of ascetic origins. Dhaumya was the son of a person whose real name is not known but who was nicknamed Apoda. He was so called because he lived only on water. Dhaumya himself is nicknamed Agniveśya, though we are not told that he was so named because he lived in the midst of fires. An Agniveśya figures in two of the preceptorial successions given in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (II, 6, 2; IV, 6, 2) as the disciple of Śāṇḍilya and Gārgya.

If the Paramahamsa and the Upaniṣadic Āruṇi are the same as the Āruṇi who was once upon a while a disciple of Dhaumya —there is nothing to show that they were not identical—then he is the earliest personage who actually combined in his asceticism physical austerity with the highest self-realizing knowledge. As we shall see later, these two are the chief elements that the best form of asceticism current among Indian Sadhus has endeavoured to practise and to foster. There are, however, schools and sects of asceticism, which have stressed only the physical part of ascetic discipline and raised it into an ideal by itself, whether in the form of contortious activity or of the more esoteric Haṭhayoga. We have seen that the Vedic description of Ekavrātyā as Īśāna brings out his peculiarity of physical austerity. He is not connected with any endeavour towards self-realization, so that he represents the earliest practice of physical austerity more or less as an end in itself. The belief that physical austerity by itself secured final salvation for an individual must have gained currency side by side with the development of spiritual knowledge that

was going on in the Upaniṣadic age. The process must have been facilitated by the fact that phýsical austerity (tapas) was a characteristic of Prajāpati in his creative aspect. We have already drawn attention to this important source of ascetic origins.

We shall note here some significant examples of ascetics practising physical austerity, who by their synchronisms, prove themselves to have belonged to an age before the composition of the Upaniṣads, though their activities are described in later and Puranic literature. The story of Śambūka, the Śūdra ascetic, as a pathetic episode is well known in Indian annals. It is described in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and poetically elaborated by Kalidāsa who describes how Rāma had to do an apparently cruel and unjust act in connection with the practice of austerity by Śambūka, a Śūdra by birth. On a complaint being made to Rāma that the unrighteous activity of ascetic practice by a Śūdra was responsible for some evils in his kingdom, Rāma set out to find out the cause and remove it. As Kalidāsa[32] describes, Rāma found the Śūdra ascetic Śambūka hanging from the boughs of a tree with his face down. Evidently on the ground, not far from his face, a fire must have been burning, for his eyes are described as having been reddened by smoke. In the technical terminology current in asceticism, the ascetic is called a 'Dhūmapā', 'one who drinks smoke'. On the banks of the Godavari, in his journey lovingly described by Kalidāsa (*Raghuvaṁśa*, XIII, 40–48), Rāma shows to Śītā two austerity spots, (tapovana) and briefly describes the great importance of the personages inhabiting them. One of the spots was sacred to the sage Śarabhaṅga. He had throughout his life kept fires there and had ultimately sacrificed his own limbs, chanting appropriate texts, to complete his life's journey. On the other spot, Śarabhaṅga's contemporary, the ascetic Sutīkṣṇa, was still living. He was engaged in carrying out an unusually hard combination of austerities, each of the components being ordinarily considered as an adequate form of austerity by itself. He was keeping the vow known as 'pancāgni–tapa' or the austerity

of five fires. For the performance of this austerity he was standing in the midst of four fires and kept gazing at the sun to satisfy the condition of having the fifth fire. The poet easily brings out the ascetic's intense absorption and great sincerity. He makes Rāma say to Sītā, "Here has the ascetic just turned his gaze for a wink at us." Sutīkṣṇa was standing with his right hand fully raised in the air in performance of another form of austerity. A practitioner of this form of austerity is technically known as 'ūrdhvabāhu', one whose hand or hands are raised up. The third vow that he was keeping was of silence so that technically he was a 'mauni'. With the practice of such austerities, it was a problem for him both to be civil to Rāma and to keep his vows. He solved it by just shaking his head in an approving manner.

These austerity-ascetics do not figure in the lists of Paramahamsas in the *Jābāla Upaniṣad*. Besides the two Brahma-realizing Paramahamsas, Uddālaka Āruṇi and Śvetaketu, there are only three other Paramahamsas in that list about whom some information is available, namely, Jaḍabharata, Durvāsa and Dattātreya. The Puranic information about Jaḍabharata shows him to be a peculiar person shrouded in mystery which is extraordinary even for the Puranic religion. If we may conclude on the basis of such information, Jaḍabharata may be considered to typify the austerity aspect of asceticism. He is supposed to be the second incarnation of Bharata, the son of Ṛṣabha. This Ṛṣabha is the same, whom we have described as the first Tīrthamkara, and who has provided us with the starting point for dating asceticism. Bharata himself is represented as having practised very severe austerities. Durvāsa is another peculiar person. He is the most-hard-to-please personage in the Puranic literature. He figures in the performance of austerities but almost never in any other aspect of asceticism. He has never been looked up to as an ascetic. The peculiar case of Jaḍabharata introduces an aspect of real Paramahamsahood as prescribed in the *Jābāla Upaniṣad*. As the name of the ascetic

indicates, meaning as it does the dull Bharata, he was known for his apparent dullness and idiocy conforming to the ideal of Paramahamsahood, which required that a Paramahamsa should behave like a child.

One goes a step further on the road to certain modern sects current among Indian Sadhus when one comes across Dattātreya. As we shall see in the chapter on the Nāthapanthi Jogis, there are some aspects characterizing certain dwindling sects of ascetics which are directly contradictory to asceticism as conceived and practised not only by the bulk of Indian Sadhus throughout history, but largely also by ascetics and monks outside India. Use of meat in all conditions of rottenness and even of human flesh, licensed indulgence in sex, and such other aberrant practices are clearly an anathema to asceticism. And yet, as we shall see later, ascetic sects indulging in such practices and idealizing them as leading to miraculous powers and to final salvation were rampant in India at least from about the beginning of the Christian era to the fourteenth century A. D. Nor have they completely disappeared today. They are certainly on the wane. If their affiliation derived them from Śaiva following and made Śiva their inspiration, that is only one and exaggerated aspect of Śiva which was developed rather late in the spiritual history of India. It appears to us that inspiration of these stemmed from an earlier source. That was from the type of Paramahamsa typified in Dattātreya. Inspiration from Śiva in this line could not have provided the total pattern. Śiva was a married man. Dattātreya on the other hand was an ascetic. Significantly, as we shall see later, Dattātreya is the tutelary diety of the Dasanami Junā Ākhāḍā.

One Dattātreya was the family priest of the Haihaya Kārtavīrya Arjuna. Whether he is identical with the Paramahamsa Dattātreya or not we cannot say. The Puranic account of Dattātreya depicts him as always in an ecstacy, surrounded by women, drinking wine and indulging in sex. In one account he demands

flesh and wine in a human skull. Yet he is said not only to have had great miraculous powers but also to have imparted self-realizing knowledge to such noted worthies as Alarka and Pralhāda, and also to his royal patron. He figures as an incarnation of Vishnu in more than one list of incarnations.[33] And he is the only ascetic incarnation that has now a cult-following and temples devoted to his worship. Buddha, another ascetic canonized as Vishnu's incarnation, is no longer an object of worship in India. And it is noteworthy that the Maharashtrian saint-poet Eknātha[34] thought it necessary to identify Viṭhobā of Pandharpur with Buddha. Dattātreya is thus the only ascetic who, being counted among the incarnations of Vishnu, has a cult and worship centring round him.

The ascetic origins of Indian Sadhus are thus seen to be very ancient. With the advent of Mahāvīra and Buddha on the Indian scene there emerged at least two new principles which could not have failed to modify the later development of Sadhuism from these origins.

Asceticism Comes of Age

Mahāvīra and Buddha pondering over the ills of this world concluded that renunciation is the only appropriate path to salvation. And Mahāvīra is perhaps the first to contradict the new trend in Indian philosophical thought that redemption or salvation is secured only through knowledge. Mahāvīra practised the most austere penances along with a younger contemporary, who attached himself to him, known as Gosāla Makkhaliputta. Both of them claimed perfect enlightenment. Mahāvīra carried forward the tradition of Pārśva and as Jina, the victor, founded the sect which was called 'Nirgrantha' meaning 'free from fetters'. Gosāla started his own sect which came to be known as Ājīvikas, 'life-longers'.

The Ājīvika sect, whose doctrines are not very clearly defined, had both an ascetic section and a householder one. The sect is mentioned in Aśoka's inscriptions. In the thirteenth year of his reign Aśoka is recorded to have dedicated cave-dwellings in Barabar hills in Bihar for the use of the monks of that sect. His officers appointed for certain religious activities took active part in the work of committees and councils not only of Buddhist and Jain sects but also of the Ājīvika and other sects. Later the Ājīvikas appear to have been known as Lokāyatas, though the Lokāyata doctrine came to be an utterly materialistic one.

In Sanskrit literature Jain monks are referred to as Kṣapaṇakas. The schism between the Śvetāmbaras, the white-clothed ones, and the Digambaras, the sky-clad ones, is believed to have started about 300 B. C. Females are ordained only in the Śvetāmbara sect. Nuns are referred to in Mathura inscriptions of

about the beginning of the Christian era. We know hardly anything about the early organization of monks and nuns of the Jain faith. But the fact that it has kept intact the Jain community and preserved such monumental and magnificent temples, is a clear proof of the strong organization of the Jain ascetic community. We do not intend to enter into a discussion of the later organization and functioning of the Jain monastic order, and we shall only draw our reader's attention to the fact that physical austerity and self-mortification have remained a very important feature of Jain asceticism.

Prince Siddhārtha, known as Buddha after his enlightenment leaving his home when he was twenty-nine years old, passed seven years in fasting and in other austerity exercises. It was after he abandoned self-mortification that he experienced the ecstatic trance and its accompaniment of redeeming knowledge. It is interesting to note that he is described to have remained on the spot for long, apparently in ecstatic trance enjoying his blissful deliverance. In later history, similar situations are described in the lives of Caitanya in the fifteenth century and Rāmakrishna Paramahamsa in the nineteenth. Buddha's enlightenment taught him to look upon the world as evil and to propound the view that for one's salvation one has to renounce it. It has always been a debatable point as to what is exactly meant by Nirvāṇa, the goal which Buddha and Buddhism have placed before their followers. True to his discovery, Buddha as enlightened monk started his work by making five monk disciples and founding a monastic order. Asceticism is ideally the only course and hence the ascetic is the only ideal type recognized by Buddhism. The lay followers, therefore, in this religion are an anomaly only to be tolerated as a concession to the weakness of human flesh. Appropriately, the organization of these ascetics called Sangha is raised to the important position of one of the three 'refuges' which the followers of Buddhism invoke. The triad is formed by Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. In no other religion has asceticism acquired this position. Yet

this asceticism is more renunciation or rather moderation than self-mortification or austerity. Buddha was very much against austerity and mortification. In his own life as a mendicant, after enlightenment Buddha is known to have accepted invitation to rich meals offered by his followers and to have permitted his disciples to do the same. He did not prescribe for the monks any active work of sympathy and compassion for the suffering humanity. Females were ordained as nuns not long after male monks began to be ordained, some relatives of Buddha and those of his first disciples being among them.

A Buddhist monk was generally known as Bhikku or Bhikṣu, and his female counterpart, Bhikkunī or Bhikṣuṇī. He is generally referred to in Sanskrit works as Parivrājaka. Within the Sangha, the monastic organization, the principle of seniority was highly respected. The older monks and nuns were known as 'Thera's and 'Theri's, 'the old ones'. Buddhist ascetics always wore ochre-coloured garments which were two or three in number. These ascetics were enjoined to wander about preaching the gospel of Buddha to the people. During the four months of the rainy season, however, they were to stay at the local Buddhist monastery called 'Vihāra' and devote their time to study and contemplation.

Jain and Buddhist asceticism thus brought in a specially laid down duty for an ascetic. And that was to preach their respective gospel. The monastic organization naturally acted as the arbiter in the matter of religious doctrines. This was an element lacking in earlier Indian asceticism. An ascetic, whether he was a 'naiṣṭhika brahmacāri', life-long celibate, or belonged to the fourth 'Āśrama', might instruct any one who approached him as a disciple in all the intricacies of spiritual knowledge. He might even teach ancillary subjects. But these were not his duties laid down on him. The pivotal position of the ascetic order in spiritual endeavour and religious living is one of the principles

introduced by Jainism and more so by Buddhism.

The congregational living at monastic centres during the rainy season for purposes of study and contemplation added another new ideal as an ascetic's duty. Out of the needs of monk's studies developed at certain big centres, institutions of learning and study which have to be described as universities in contemporary terminology. By far the most famous of such centres was the one that grew round the Bnddhist monastery at Nālandā in Bihar. An older centre existed at Taxilā in the extreme North-West; but there is no reason to think that it was based on a monastic focus. Fame of individual teachers, who were not organised into a college or an institution, was responsible for attracting students to it.[1] The monastic centre as an educational institution must be considered to be the contribution of Jainism, and more particularly of Buddhism to Indian asceticism. As we shall see later, temples, and monastic centres of Hindu ascetics, from at least mediæval ages, have been discharging this function of serving as educational institutions not only for their ascetic inmates, but also for the lay public.

Before the spread of Buddhism, the educational institution current among the people was that of 'Gurukula' or the teacher's house. Most of the Āśramas well-known in Puranic literature, those of Dhaumya, of Kaṇva, of Vālmiki and others were the abodes in the nearby forests of persons in the third stage of life, 'Vānaprastha's. An ascetic could rarely have had such an establishment. At least no indubitable example can be cited. When, therefore, we come across, in Buddhist literature of the second or the third century B. C., description of a Brahmin sage accompanied by his pupils and settling down in some place, as the sage Bāvari is recorded in the *Suttanipāta* (V, 1, 1-3) to have done, we may conclude that Brahmin ascetics had already taken their cue from Buddhist monks and modified their ascetic practices to that extent.

The rise and organization of these ascetic orders, particularly

of the Buddhist Sangha, must have had great influence on the institution of asceticism and its practice which, as we have seen, existed in the Upaniṣadic age in two varieties. It is a pity that ancient sources do not furnish any information about the transformation and growth or development that took place in this institution during three or four centuries after the rise of Buddhism. If we may consider the references to ascetic orders in Buddhist literature of about the beginning of the Christian era as more or less valid for two or three centuries before its production, then we can say that there was a plethora of ascetic orders which did not belong either to Buddhism or to Jainism. We are informed in this literature that there were 'Śramaṇas' or ascetics who were followers of naked, unclothed 'Guru' who, for aught we know, might have been the Jain Digambaras. We also notice in the list sectarian ascetics called 'Tīrthika's.[2] 'Kumāravrata's - evidently the 'naiṣṭhika brahmacārī's are meant - find their place side by side with 'Dīrghajaṭa's or ascetics with long matted hair. There are ascetics of the more orthodox description known as 'Pancatapa's ('Pancāgnitapa's) turning to the sun for their fifth fire. There are those who squatted on their heels, others who lay on beds of thorns, ashes or grass, others who rested on a pestle. 'Traidaṇḍika's, too, are mentioned in another list. The more bizarre ones of the 'Haṭha-yoga' type are in evidence also, being referred to as ascetics who keep the Dog - and - Cattle - and-Beasts - of - the - Chase vows.

It is noteworthy that the ascetics described in these lists are none of them referred to, in the manner of the later sectarian practice, by reference to their tutelary deity or to their founder.

There is no mention of female ascetics and it is very doubtful whether females were ordained into 'Samnyāsa'. A 'Parivrājikā' is mentioned by Patanjali; but, as we have stated, that term denoted a Buddhist Bhikkunī. The statement that Aśoka's daughter Cārumatī is known to have settled down as an ascetic in the temple of Paśupatinātha at Khatmandu in Nepal[3] lends support to the

view that even within the Hindu fold females could take to ascetic life. Much later, Kalidasa, in his *Shakuntala*, and Daṇḍin, in his *Daśakumāracarita* (pp. 138, 141), refers to Tāpasīs or female ascetics who are undoubtedly Hindu Sadhvis.

It must prove very interesting to note the impression that Indian Sadhus made on foreigners. The earliest of such is the one left by the Greeks who accompanied Alexander. They have recorded their impact with two Sadhus, one who had a shaven head and the other, wearing long hair. Both of them had disciples about them. One of them was avowedly following the vow of exposing himself to the elements, especially to the sun and the rain. The other with the help of a long staff was carrying out the austerity of standing on one leg. Strabo [4] has added the following interesting information: "The Naked Ones live, as their name imports, without clothes, in the open air for the most part, practising endurance upto the age of thirty-seven. Women may live with them, bound to continence. These are the class most reverenced by the people." The impact between Alexander and one such ascetic at Taxila may be given in the words of E. R. Bevan[5] who writes: "The report reached Alexander himself of a strange set of men who were to be seen naked somewhere near the city, 'practising endurance', men commanding great reverence among the people. It was no use his sending for them, since they would refuse to come: those who wished to learn their secret must go to them. Alexander, however, on his side, felt he could not go to them consistently with his dignity; so he chose an envoy, a Greek officer named Onesicrytus, who had been a disciple of the Cynic philosopher Diogenes, a figure obviously akin to the Indian ascetics..... He found fifteen ascetics some ten miles from the city, sitting naked and motionless in a sun so burning that one could not even walk over the stones with bare feet..... The ascetic to whom Onesicrytus first addressed himself answered bluntly that no one coming in the bravery of European clothes..... could learn their wisdom..... Another answered more mildly

that it was really very creditable for such a man as Alexander to desire to know something of the deeper wisdom, but one must remember that to attempt to convey their teaching through three interpreters, common men incapable of understanding more than the mere words, would be like trying to make water flow clear through mud".

One of the ascetics, whom the Greeks have called Kalanos, accompanied Alexander and became a very notable figure of his entourage. In Persia he suddenly announced his resolve to leave the world. Alexander tried to dissuade him, but to no purpose. A pyre was erected for him to which he was conducted with pomp. Chanting hymns he ascended it in the presence of Alexander's army and assumed what would appear to be the 'yogic' posture of 'Dhyāna'. The ascetic is reported to have kept perfectly motionless as the flames mounted and wrapped his figure.[6]

The earliest and the first mention of sectarian ascetics occurs in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* (VII, 8), in the *Atharvaśiras Upaniṣad* (67) and in Patanjali's *Vyākaraṇa Mahābhāṣya*, (under Pāṇini, V, 2, 76). In the *Maitri Upaniṣad*, 'Kapālin's are mentioned. From the way they are castigated, it is clear that they were looked upon as a false brand of ascetics. In the *Atharvaśiras Upaniṣad*, ascetics of thc 'Pāśupata' sect reaching the 'Paramahamsa' stage are suggested. Patanjali mentions a Śiva-Bhāgavata with his peculiarity of carrying in his hand an iron lance as an emblem of the deity. It is possible to look upon them as a sect of householders like the later Lingāyats. But in view of later association it is equally probable that, if the whole sect was not an ascetic one, it had an ascetic section.

From the second century B. C. to the seventh century A.D. is a far cry. Yet no mention of sectarian ascetics in the intervening period is available. The sources speaking of ascetics in the seventh century testify to the wide-spread of the two Śaiva ascetic sects, the Pāśupatas and the Kapālins. Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese

pilgrim-traveller of the early part of the seventh century A. D., in his fairly detailed account of the religious condition of northern India, has provided us with information about other sects than the Buddhists, though naturally in less detail. Non-Buddhist places of worship are mentioned as Deva temples. For each area that he describes, almost unfailingly he gives the number of the Deva temples. He then states that they have worshippers, without always giving the total number. He sometimes specifies that the worshippers live in the temples. And whenever he specifies the sect of these worshippers, he calls them Pāśupatas, 'cinder-sprinkled.'

Observing about North India in general, Hiuen Tsang has recorded the dress of what he calls non-believers, that is, non-Buddhists. He says [7]: "Some wear peacocks' feathers; some wear as ornaments necklaces, made of skull bones (the 'Kapāladhārins'); some have no clothing, but go naked ('Nirgranthas'); some wear leaf or bark garments; some pull out their hair and cut out their moustaches; others have bushy whiskers and their hair braided on the top of their heads." From the account here presented we may feel sure that the description of dress, except in the first item, fits ascetic sects more than the lay public. The reference to 'kapāladhārins' or 'kapālins' is the only one of its kind occurring in the whole of Hiuen Tsang's description of the different areas of northern India. In connection with Deva temples he generally states the existence and residence of various heretical sects. And when he specifically mentions any sect it is only the Pāśupatas. We think it to be a legitimate conclusion from this differential treatment that the most important sect af ascetics in northern India in Hiuen Tsang's time was that of the Pāśupatas. We may further conclude that the Kāpālika ascetics were known and in evidence, but in small numbers. It is very remarkable that they should be mentioned by Hiuen Tsang specifically in connection with the Deva temples of Kapisa, beyond the Hindukush and not very far from Kabul. His observation is worth quoting because of the numerical strength of the heretic ascetics belonging to the three sects of the Nirgranthas,

the Pāśupatas and the Kapāladhāṛins, declared by implication to be living together indiscriminately. It runs thus[8] : "There are some ten temples of the Devas and one thousand or so of heretics *(different way of religion);* there are naked ascetics, and others who cover themselves with ashes, and some who make chaplets of bones, which they wear as crowns on their heads."

In India proper, the Jalandar kingdom of the Punjab, Hiuen Tsang mentions, had in its three Deva temples about 500 Pāśupatas. In the country of the Ahikṣetra 300 Pāśupatas distributed in nine Deva temples are described as sacrifising to Īśvara. In the kingdom of Varanasi or Banaras, there were about a hundred Deva temples with about 10,000 sectarians principally worshipping Maheśvara. They are thus described: "Some cut their hair off, others tie their hair in a knot, and go naked, without clothes (Nirgranthas); they cover their bodies with ashes (Pāśupatas), and by the practice of all sorts of austerities they seek to escape birth and death."

Here we may record one of the most significant observations of Hiuen Tsang about the twenty Deva temples situated in the city of Banaras that they were fully covered by foliage of trees and encircled by streams of pure water. In view of the claims later made by other religionists about the size of the statues of their deities or founders, and even irrespective of them, it is very interesting to note that in one of the temples there was not only the idol of god Maheśvara installed but it was perhaps the hugest of all such statues, being only a little less than hundred feet high. Hiuen Tsang was mightily impressed by it, for he has recorded: "Its appearance is grave and majestic, and appears as though really living."[9]

Hiuen Tsang while mentioning Deva temples in the eastern and southern parts of the country does not commonly specify the sectarians attached to them. In lower Bengal and Orissa he mentions mostly Nirgranthas or naked Jains. It is only when he describes Kachha and the western part of our country and regions beyond our western

border almost as far as Persia, that he mentions the Deva temples specifying the resident sectarians as Pāśupatas. In the capital town of a country which seems to have been a part of Sindh, he mentions a beautiful temple of Maheśvara occupied by Pāśupata sectarians, its idol being known as "possessed of great spiritual powers". Almost on the border of Persia, numerous Pāśupatas, again, in a Maheśvara temple are mentioned. In the country of the Gazna, numerous 'Tīrthāka' heretics are described as principally devoted to a Deva spirit which settled there coming from mount Aruna in Kapisa. That by Tīrthakas Hiuen Tsang means ascetics, is clear from the following description of his. "The heretics (Tīrthakas), by subduing their minds and mortifying their flesh, get from the spirits of heaven sacred formulae. By the use of these they are frequently able to control diseases and recover the sick."[10]

For an account of the coming of age of Sadhuism, two or three observations of Hiuen Tsang are almost crucial. First, he states that at Prayāg one of the Deva temples was celebrated for numerous miracles. At the confluence of the rivers he saw a high column raised in the middle. There 'heretics', that is non-Buddhists, by whom are clearly meant Hindu ascetics, performed a particular kind of austerity. When the sun was about to go down, they used to climb up the pillar and clinging to it with one hand and one foot 'wonderfully' held themselves out with one foot and one arm and kept themselves stretched out in the air fixing their eyes on the sun. They came down only after it was dark. There were many dozens of ascetics practising such austerity to escape birth and death. Many of them practised this austerity for 'several decades of years'.[11] Another observation, which is in connection with Mayapura, Gangadvara or Hardvara, attests to the social and charitable activities conducted at Hindu places of pilgrimage. He says: "There are always hundreds and thousands of people gathered together here from distant quarters to bathe and wash in its (Ganges) waters. Benevolent kings have founded here a 'house of merit' (Puṇyāśālā). This foundation was endowed with funds for

providing choice food and medicines to bestow in charity on widows and bereaved persons, on orphans and the destitute."[12]

We may thank Hiuen Tsang for such important information and before bidding him good-bye draw upon his acute observation to inform our readers that with its coming of age asceticism or Sadhuism had retained its Upaniṣadic characteristics to a large extent. The teaching activity of the monasteries was in the Upaniṣadic age the sweet concern of individual ascetics. Hiuen Tsang has something to say about such individual teachers though he does not describe them as ascetics. Here are his remarks:[13] "There are some, deeply versed in antiquity, who devote themselves to elegant studies, and live apart from the world, and retain the simplicity of their character. These rise above mundane present, and are insensible to renown as to the contempt of the world. Their name having spread afar, the rulers appreciate them highly, but are unable to draw them to the court. The chief of the country honours them on account of their (mental) gifts and the people exalt their fame and render them universal homage. This is the reason of their devoting themselves to their studies with ardour and resolution, without any sense of fatigue. They search for wisdom, relying on their own resources. Although they are possessed of large wealth, yet they will wander here and there to seek their subsistence. There are others who, whilst attaching value to letters, will yet without shame consume their fortunes in wandering about for pleasure, neglecting their duties. They squander their substance in costly food and clothing. Having no virtuous principle, and no desire to study, they are brought to disgrace, and their infamy is widely circulated."

This practice is attested in Sanskrit literature about two generations before Hiuen Tsang. Daṇḍin in his *Daśakumāracarita* (pp. 13-23) refers to an ascetic named Vāmadeva, residing and having pupils in the Vindhya forest. Daṇḍin calls him 'Tapodhana', 'one whose wealth is austerity.' Another ascetic who

had established a reputation for 'divine sight' is referred to as 'Maharṣi' and 'Bhagavān' Marīci. He had his establishment just outside Campā, the capital of Bengal of that time (*Daśakumāra-carita*, pp. 78, 90, 135).

Kāpālika ascetics under the designation of Mahāvratins are mentioned as residing in the temple of god Kapāleśvara situated somewhere in the Nasik district, in the second quarter of the seventh century A. D. A copperplate charter of Nāgavardhan, nephew of Pulakeśin II of Maharashtra, records this fact in his grant of a village near Igatpuri for the worship of the god and for the maintenance of the resident ascetics.[14]

Further south in the heart of Tamilnad at Kanchi, the drama *Mattavilāsaprahasana* of the Pallava king Mahendravikrama attests the existence of both the Pāśupata and the Kāpālika ascetic sects along side of Buddhist Bhikṣus. Mahendra was a contemporary of Pulukeśin II of Maharashtra. From the incidents in this drama we may conclude that during the first quarter of the seventh century A. D. the sect of the Kāpālikas was gaining ground over not only the Buddhists but even over the Śaiva sect of the Pāśupatas.

Till the end of the 8th century A. D. the ascetic world of India was mainly composed of Buddhists, Jains, Pāśupatas and Kāpālikas. The Pāśupatas and Kāpālikas were evidently living in local temples of Śiva, who was generally represented in the form of Maheśvara and only sporadically in the form of Kapāleśvara. Non-denominational ascetics, that is, those who were neither Pāśupatas nor Kāpālikas and who lived in the ancient tradition of solitary asceticism were also known in northern India. It is on such a scene that an ascetic star of the first magnitude appeared on the horizon in the extreme south-west of India. It is the great Śaṅkarācārya. He is the counterpart of Sanatkumāra in the Brahmanic system. Sanatkumāra, the 'naiṣṭhika brahmacārī', life-long celibate, lived not less than sixteen centuries before

Śaṅkarācārya. Even in an early Upaniṣad he is styled Bhagavān, 'His Holiness'. Śaṅkarācārya is referred to by his followers even more reverentially as Śrīmadbhagavatpādāh, 'His Majestic Holiness' feet'.

The great activity of this young intellectual comprehended writing, disputation, long journeys and organization. The religious situation of his age was almost chaotic. Popular Buddhism was getting more and more like some of the vulgar forms of Hinduism. Under the blows of Kumārilabhaṭṭa it had already begun to show signs of crumbling. But it had left enough landmarks of its bad effects. Cults like those of the Pāśupatas and the Kāpālikas, some of whose doctrines and practices were clearly immoral, were in a flourishing condition. It seems that as a consequence of Buddhist and Jain influence asceticism was growing in the Hindu fold. No doubt, Vaishnavism of the Vāsudeva cult had been making great strides. It had already established itself as the royal sect as can be judged from the fact that a number of Gupta emperors styled themselves Bhāgavatas or Parama-Bhāgavatas. And Vaishnavism, Vāsudevism or Bhāgavatism at that period did not countenance 'Samnyāsa'. The *Bhagavadgītā*, as a matter of fact, insisted on disinterested activity as the true spiritual path. But the *Brahmasūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa, which is later than the Bhagavadgītā, is generally believed to countenance asceticism as the proper method of escape from the cycle of birth and death. The Yoga-system of philosophy also seems to have been fully developed and preached about the same time. With its insistence on body control as a means to mental elevation and final salvation, it, too, may be said to have encouraged the ascetic trend. Śaṅkarācārya while giving the monistic interpretation of the *Brahmasūtra* carved out a working compromise between renouncing this world and carrying on its routine duties. The path of knowledge as the method of salvation would necessitate renouncing the world. That was one way of Brahma-realization. The path of mundane duty rightly performed, Śaṅkarācārya preached, effects the same salva-

tion but in a deferred manner. The generality of mankind would do well to follow that path. Thus he preached against indiscriminate Samnyāsa and stemmed it in one way.

Saṅkarācārya, himself a 'naiṣṭhika brahmacārī', life-long celibate, could hardly be expected to have his favourite disciples from among householders. He seems always to have been on the move and his favourite disciples could not but be 'naiṣṭhika brahmacārīs' like himself. We know the names of at least four of them. For the consolidation and spread of his religio-philosophical ideas he established four centres. What determined the choice of these we do not know exactly in respect of all of them. Dwaraka and Puri were evidently famous centres of pilgrimage. But Badri, or rather Jyoti, was not so well-known a centre. We remember the observation of Hiuen Tsang about Hardwar being the most famous centre of his time. And Hardwar is situated only a few miles down the road which connects Badri with the plains. Prayāg was another religious centre; and to judge by the magnificence of its temples and the large number of resident ascetics, Banaras, as described by Hiuen Tsang, was still another. But none of these was selected for basing the monastic centres. Śṛngeri was selected perhaps because of Śaṅkarācārya's personal experiences and also owing to the centres of Kāpālika and Kālàmukha sects being in the nearby region. These four centres were placed under the charge of the four disciples. And they were entrusted with the responsibility of religio-philosophical affairs of their specified regions. With due deference to the great vision of the philosopher, it must be pointed out that Badri was too inconvenient a place to supervise and control the religious affairs of the major and important portion of northern India coming under its charge.

We have briefly described the educational arrangement prevalent in northern India in the times preceding Śaṅkarācārya. There is no evidence to show that there temples served as educational centres. The situation in South India was the same. Nor

was there any Buddhist educational institution of note. Under these circumstances the emergence of temple-colleges, whether meant for householders or for ascetics or for both, about the beginning of the 10th century A.D., must be attributed to the impetus given by Śaṅkarācāry's organizational activity. The first among such temple-colleges is the one attached to the temple of Trayipurusha situated in the village of Salotgi in Bijapur district and endowed by a minister of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king, Krishna III in A. D. 945. Another college attached to the temple at Hebbal in Dharwar district which received an endowment in the 10th century A. D. is described as 'matha'[15]. Another record of A. D. 1075 registering an endowment in favour of a temple at Bijapur provides for food and raiments to ascetics, evidently residing there either as permanent inmates or as students.[16] In the light of what is said above we are fully justified to credit Śaṅkarācārya with having comprehended the duty of educational activity in the routine life of the pontiffs of the monastic centres and their disciples.

We shall have occasion to show that the extreme sect of the Kāpālikas was getting transformed in consequence of the religious upheaval that was going on during the latter part of the first millennium A. D. The earliest evidence of this important transformation in southern India is to be had in the history of the Śaiva sect of the Kālāmukhas. It is noteworthy that whereas Śaṅkarācārya[17] at about the beginning of the 9th century A. D. introduces the Pāśupatas and the Kāpālikas to dispute out the current Śaiva schools of thought, Rāmānujācārya in the second quarter of the 11th century, who lived in about the same latitude, speaks of the Kālāmukhas along with the Kāpālikas and their 'pernicious' doctrines. The Kālāmukhas had an establishment in Mysore region at Nandi. Its head, one Īśvaradāsa, was granted a village by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa King Govind III in A. D. 807. Īśvaradāsa is known to have been the disciple of one Kālaśakti.[18] Since that time, the Kālāmukhas flourished, and established 'mathas' and temples in Mysore region. In the 11th century A. D. the famous

Koṭīśvara temple at Kuppatur was under their management. It had under its control seventy-seven other temples. Sarveśvaraśakti, the pontiff of Kotīsvara is designated 'Rājaguru', royal preceptor, in an inscription of A.D., 1070. From this time onwards till about the 13th century A. D., there were a number of personages who were pontiffs either at Kuppatur or Belagame who are designated as Rājagurus, the most famous of them being Sarveśvaraśakti the younger, who flourished about the last quarter of the 13th century. Evidently they were the preceptors of the Hoysala kings of Mysore. The Kālāmukhas were originally a colony of Kashmiri Brahmins, who had brought this particular sect with them and settled in Mysore region. They disappeared completely from this region after A. D. 1410.[19]

The temple-college at Belagame known as the Koḍiyamaṭha or Kedāreśvara temple was a great educational institution in the 12th century A. D. catering even for non-Śaiva ascetics.[20]

The growth and importance of the Kālāmukhas in a region not very far from the chief monastic centre of Śaṅkarācārya, namely Śṛṅgeri, from the 11th century onwards shows that Sureśvarācārya, the pupil of Śaṅkarācārya, who was the pontiff at Śṛṅgeri till his passing away at the beginning of the 10th century A. D., did not succeed in carrying forward the important mission of his great preceptor. There is other evidence from further north, that is, Marathi districts, corroborating the inference that the Śṛṅgeri centre did not fulfil its mission. A Karhad grant of Krishna III dated A. D. 958 records the bestowal of a village on Gaganaśiva, who was an Acharya, and a pupil of Iśānaśiva. He is described as practising great austerities and as the head of the religious establishment at Valkaleśvara in Karahāta.[21] Gaganaśiva was evidently outside the organization of Śaṅkarācārya's Śaiva Samnyāsis and does not seem to be either a Pāśupata or a Kālāmukha. Another Rāshtrakūta record[22] from Marathi region speaks of a learned man who had set himself as a 'Jagadguru', world preceptor, a title which

throughout later history has been reserved for the pontiffs of Śṛṅgeri. This is a clear proof of the mission of the Śṛṅgeri 'maṭha' not having been fulfilled or of its authority not having been acknowledged by the people. It is in keeping with this situation that in the drama *Prabodha-candrodaya*, written in the last quarter of the 11th century A. D. to propagate Vaishnavism in northern India, the author who was a king of Bundelkhand, did not find it necessary to introduce a Śaiva ascetic of the Śaṅkarācārya organization. He introduced a Buddhist, a Jain and a Kāpālika ascetic and combated their doctrines to discard them in favour of Vaishnavism. If ascetics of the Śaṅkarācārya persuasion had attained any significance in northern India, the author would surely have introduced one to disprove the truth of his doctrines and practices. As is well known, in southern India one after another Vaishnava teachers and philosophers began a serious campaign against Śaṅkarācārya's doctrines at least from about the latter part of the 10th century A.D. We may rightly conclude that the organization of ascetics and monastic centres had not progressed much by the end of the 11th century A. D. on the path of fulfilment of its mission.

Northern India does not show any important ascetic with significant intellectual or other activity till the beginning of the 14th century, when Rāmānanda appears on the scene. Far off Kashmir, the one region of India fortunate to have a mediæval historian in the person of Kalhaṇa, had, even before the middle of the 12th century, not only temples but also 'maṭhas', which appear to have been some kind of religious institutions. Kalhana[23] informs us that a queen by name Śrīlekhā, not very far removed from his time, had erected two 'maṭhas', one in the name of her husband and the other in that of her son. He describes[24] with apparent feeling the evil tendencies of a particularly bad king of Kashmir by name Kalaśa, who reigned in the latter half of the 11th century A. D., and the havoc wrought on the character of this king by the wicked and evil advice given by his spiritual preceptor, Pramadakaṇṭha who was a Śaiva.

Pramadakaṇṭha, who was the son of a much better father, Amarakaṇṭha, was perhaps a householder like his father; and his indulgence in immoral practices cannot be looked upon as typical of ascetics in Kashmir. But Kalhaṇa has obliged us by describing, a little later, the antics of an ascetic who was the head of a religious centre ('maṭhādhīśa'). He is described as 'jaṭi' or one with matted hair. His name was Vyomaśiva. Kalhaṇa[25] has vouchsafed to us some still more interesting information by designating him Sādhu. We believe this is the earliest description of an ascetic as a Sādhu. It is clear that Śankarian asceticism had not got a foothold in Kashmir and that the excesses of some Śaiva schools had led to the development of vulgarized 'Guruhood', 'religious preceptorship', much earlier perhaps than elsewhere in India. In this respect, too, the pained heart of Kalhaṇa has given us an insight into what may be considered as a prototype of such practices. Kalhaṇa (VII, 281-283) tells us that there was a merchant who was nicknamed Cat-Merchant ('biḍāla-vaṇik'). He was so called because he always carried a black cat in his lap. Nobody ever knew his real name. By degrees he, though stupid, had set himself up as a physician and a preceptor. By and by he got himself recognised as the accredited preceptor of artisans such as washermen and others. Whenever confronted by a learned preceptor he used to upset him by placing his hand besmeared with cat's excreta and asafoetida on the head of his opponent. Disgusted with such noxious-smelling things the confronting Brahmins used to leave his company post-haste rather than engage in disputation.

When the preceptorial institution is vulgarized, its inroads on domestic felicity are quicker and more sweeping than its conquest in the male world. The observant and thoughtful Kalhaṇa, in an earlier context, while eulogizing the reign of king Yaśaskara (VI, 10-13) writes with gladdened heart that these evils did not exist then. Brahmin preceptors, even those singing Sāmaveda, did not drink wine then; nor did ascetics ('tāpasa')

collect together wife, son, cattle and grain; nor did stupid teachers, practising rites involving the use of fish and such other things, attempt to discuss through their writings religio-philosophica questions. And the best of all, "there were no housewives who getting themselves possessed by spirits through their religious preceptor's initiation, were engaged in proclaiming bankruptcy of character of their husbands through the shakings of their heads", which is an invariable component of possessed behaviour. So where Śaṅkara asceticism had not penetrated, the natural development of Śaiva schools had led to a distinct deterioration in the religious and even in the ascetic sphere.

It is refreshing to turn from this scene of demoralization to a place where the purer form of older asceticism, chastened by the activity and preaching of Śaṅkarācārya, had produced at about the same time the great ascetic who seems to have been a 'naiṣṭhika brahmacāri' and is designated Paramahamsa. We refer to the great jurist Vijñāneśvara, who lived in the last quarter of the 11th century A. D. We have quoted above the observation of Hiuen Tsang that there were learned ascetics in northern India who preferred to teach, preach, and write by themselves and declined royal patronage. We do not possess any of their intellectual products and we are not in a position to judge whether these learned ascetics succeeded in properly fulfilling their mission without the royal patronage which they spurned. With Vijñāneśvara we stand on the threshold of a new era. He was at the court of his royal patron Vikramāditya VI of the Western Chālukya Dynasty of Kalyāṇi and wrote his famous treatise on the law of inheritance and succession, namely *Mitākṣarā*, which synthesized the sentiments of his generation and has held sway for so many centuries. Whether he acted as an adviser to his patron, and if so, in what spheres of activity, unfortunately, we do not know.

For about a century after Vijñāneśvara we have no knowledge of any great ascetic excepting Gorakhnātha as will be made clear

in the sequel. Gorakhnātha in founding the sect of Kānphāṭā Jogis rendered valuable service in the process of transforming the more obnoxious forms of beliefs and practices then current in northern India into less objectionable ones. He also helped in giving a final death blow to Buddhism in northern and especially north-eastern India. He not only strengthened the practice of 'Haṭhayoga' but even seems to have contributed a significant quota towards its formulation. What exactly were the services rendered by him and his sect to Hindus and Hinduism in their fight against the onslaughts of Islam, we do not know. One thing that we do know is that there is even today a sect among Indian Muslims known as Jāfar Jogis which among other things is given to the practice of 'Yoga'. Tradition records that Gorakhnātha was a much-travelled man and had even visited Mecca. We shall notice that prominent heads of monastic centres of Gorakhnāthis are known as 'Pīrs', a term which appropriately signifies Muslim saints. On the whole, it appears to us that like the later Mānabhāva sect in Maharashtra, Gorakhnātha and his sect in northern India compromised in some way with the Muslims.

For the next great ascetic we have again to turn to the South to discover him in the person of Rāmānujācārya. He took to asceticism after his marriage and is said to have founded the Vaishnava school of asceticism known as Tridaṇḍī. Unlike Śaṅkarācārya and many other great religio-philosophical writers, he was ordained into asceticism after he had lived a married life for some time. The heads of religious centres founded by him or belonging to his religious school are, however, not ascetics. His main activity lay in the latter part of the 11th century and he is believed to have relinquished his body sometime in the beginning of the 12th century A. D.

Śaṅkarācārya not only accomplished the task of conquering Buddhism, and various demoralizing sects of Hinduism, revitalizing

and organizing the latter, but also, by a clear enunciation of monistic philosophy, created vigorous reaction and intellectual effort among Hindu thinkers. It was amongst the Vaishnava 'Ācāryas' of Madras region that the first reaction manifested itself. Rāmānujācārya, who flourished about the same time as Vijñāneśvara, opposed Śaṅkara's philosophy by propounding what is known as qualified monism; and as an integral part of his philosophy placed Vishnu as personal God and made devotion to Him, in the company of his wife Lakshmi, the central doctrine of his scheme of salvation. The traditional preceptorial succession mentions only two predecessors of Rāmānujācārya so that this Vaishnava reaction to Śaṅkara's challenge can be dated back to the end of the 10th century A.D. This leaves a blank of about a century between Śaṅkarācārya and the Vaishnava reaction. Unfortunately we do not possess any Sanskrit literature of that period giving an idea of the seething religious ferment that ultimately effervesced in Rāmānujācārya's system of thought. The devotional songs and other literature of the 'Alvars' available in Tamil alone testifies to the religious ferment of this blank age.

Rāmānujācārya by his system of qualified monism, far from putting down the religious ferment, actually added some leaven to it. By putting the personal God Vishnu at the centre of his scheme of salvation he provided a crystallizing centre for the scattered elements of Vaishnava devotion attached to various forms and incarnations of Vishnu.

Another aspect of Vaishnava crystallization substituted Krishna and Rādhā in place of Vishnu and Lakshmi, representing Rādhā as the wife of Krishna. In the philosophical aspect the leaven worked to produce the comprehensive philosophical doctrine of duality – non - duality. This work was achieved by Nimbārka who belonged to Paiṭhaṇ and afterwards moved to Mathurā - Vrindāvan. Nimbārka was a life - long celibate. Unfortunately we do not know who his ascetic preceptor was. He founded the

ascetic sect known as 'Sanaka sampradāya' or 'Sudarśana sampradāya'. It is the oldest among the existing Vaishnava ascetic sects. In actuality, therefore, the honour of being the first to found organized Vaishnava asceticism belongs to him, though, as stated above, Rāmānujācārya is believed to have introduced 'Tridaṇḍī' asceticism among Vaishnavas. Nimbārka's intellectual activity is represented in his Sanskritic works, one of which is considered to be a 'Bhāṣya' on the *Brahmasūtra*. He is believed to have left his body in A.D. 1162.

Madhvācārya, the next great ascetic, hailed from the southern part of Karnatak. This area, it is interesting to note, is some distance north of the area where Śaṅkarācārya was born and a fairly long distance south-west of the place where Vijñāneśvara flourished and of the place where Nimbārka was born. Madhvācārya, whose original name was Vāsudeva, like Śaṅkarācārya and Nimbārka was ordained into asceticism while still a bachelor His spiritual preceptor was one Acyutaprekṣācārya or Puruṣottama Tīrtha. Madhvācārya was thus an ascetic of the Śaṅkara school and his ascetic name was Ānanda Tīrtha. His main activity is referable to the second and the third quarters of the 13th century.

Ānanda Tīrtha though an ascetic of the Śaṅkara school broke away from it, demonstrating the effect of the Vaishnava leaven introduced into religious ferment by Rāmānuja and Nimbārka. He elaborated his own system of devotion centring it round Lakshmi – Nārāyaṇa that is, Nārāyaṇa accompanied by Lakshmi. Thus (with regard to personal god) he may be said to have followed Rāmāṅuja though in the matter of devotional technique he differed from him. In actual practice, however, he installed the idol of Śrī Krishna alone in his temple at Udipi.[26] His great difference from all his predecessors lay in his philosophical doctrines. In his 'Bhāṣya' on the *Brahmasūtra*, he propounded dualistic philosophy. He established various centres for propagating his religio-philosophical views, which are presided over by ascetic abbots.

They are mostly confined to the Kannada and Tulu speaking areas.

Jñāneśvara or Jnānadeva, the great saint-poet of Maharashtra, in many ways, both resembles Śaṅkarācārya and contrasts with him. He was the son of one Viṭhṭhalapanta, born to him after he had renounced asceticism and returned to householder's life. Viṭhṭhalapanta was ordained into asceticism at Banaras and named Caitanyāśrama by one Rāmānanda. It is very unlikely that this Rāmānanda is the same as the famous Rāmānanda who became the promulgator of the sect known after him. That Rāmānanda is generally believed to have been born in A.D. 1300. We learn from tradition that he was ordained into asceticism by one Rāghavānanda. From the ascetic name of Viṭhṭhalapanta which ends in 'Āśrama' we can conclude that his ascetic preceptor Rāmānanda belonged to the Āśrama order of Dasanāmi ascetics of the Śaṅkara school. We know Rāghavānanda's ascetic affiliation with the Rāmānuja school, though his name ends in Ānanda. Ānanda-ending names later became almost a sub-sect as in Maharashtra in the 16th century. The 'Brahmacāris', celibate juniors, of the monastic centre of the Śaṅkara school known as 'Jyotir maṭha', situated between Haradwar and Badri, are known to have borne the 'Ānanda' title. Banaras was famous as some kind of a centre even in the time of Śaṅkarācārya. Though A. S. Altekar has waxed eloquent over the greatness of Banaras as a centre of learning he has not been able, either in his book *Education in Ancient India* or in his special monograph on Banaras, to produce a single example of a great scholar either ascetic or non-ascetic, from that place before Rāmānanda, the founder of the Rāmānandi sect, appeared on the scene. However, it is clear from this fact of Jnāneśvara's father having taken his ascetic ordination from Rāmānanda, that there was not only a flourishing centre of Śaṅkara ascetics at Banaras but also that it was more important than the original monastic centre of Śaṅkara at Śṛṅgeri.

Jñāneśvara was born in A. D. 1275. He soon gravitated to

the then famous place of learning and arbiter of moral conduct, namely Paiṭhan, and had his principal trials in that place. He resembled the great Śaṅkarācārya in that, like him, he took straightway to asceticism in the capacity of a life-long celibate. Like him again he left his material body quite early in life, having been only 21 years of age at that event. But unlike him and unlike also his great predecessor of Paiṭhan, Nimbārka, he wrote his religio-philosophical discussions in Marathi, renouncing Sanskrit. His contributions to the literature in Marathi language were most valuable and have an abiding interest. In this respect he can justly be compared with the Italian Dante. In his writings he mentions his elder brother Nivṛttinātha as his preceptor. Nivṛttinātha himself, as his name indicates and tradition asserts, was the disciple of a Nāthapanthi ascetic, Gahinīnātha, a direct disciple of Gorakhnātha. According to one tradition Jñāneśvara is said to have handed down Nātha sectarianism, though unbelievably, to his disciple Satyāmalanātha and through his pupil, to Gaibīnātha. Gaibīnātha is known to have been born in A. D. 1520. Jñāneśvara is known to have died in A. D. 1296. For Satyāmalanātha, who is represented as the direct disciple of Jñāneśvara, to have been able to pass on the sectarianism by direct transmission to Gaibīnātha, he must have lived a long life of about two centuries and thirty years! Evidently Satyāmalanātha's handing down of Nātha sectarianism from Jñāneśvara could not have been one of direct discipleship but only one of adoption. And this conclusion is in conformity with Jñāneśvara's life as well as the continued tradition and practice wherein he stands as the founder and starter of a new devotional school in Maharashtra known as the Vārakarī sect.

In his philosophical outlook Jñāneśvara is essentially a follower of the Śaṅkara school of Monistic Vedanta. But he is reconciled to a personal God not only for the less intellectual and erring humanity but also for himself. His chants in the name of the God of Paṇḍhari and his consort are almost as emotionally charged as

those of the purely devotional saint-poet Tukāram, who lived three centuries later. In this connection his association with Paiṭhan becomes an event of more than passing interest. Nimbārka, who was born at Paiṭhan, is the first historically known preacher to install Rādhā-Krishna as the personal God. Did Jñāneśvara see and realize some of the moral lapses that Nimbārka's doctrine had fallen into in the practice of his followers or did he foresee such a debacle that he, for the benefit of his Maharashtrian brothers and sisters, substituted Viṭhṭhala-Rakhumāi of Pandharpur for Rādhā-Krishna of Vrindāvan ? Rukmiṇī is the wedded wife of Krishna. Viṭhṭhala is the southern variation of Vishnu. Krishna is Vishnu. Hence the transformation of Rādhā-Krishna into Viṭhṭhala-Rakhumāi stresses the male element of the married couple and leaves no chance for other relations like dalliance with a beloved female. If Nimbārka, through some tradition or the other, did not serve as an inspiration for Jñāneś-vara, who is the first amongst the great monistic Vedantists to preach devotion to personal Vaishnavite deity as a means of salvation, one tradition seeks to rob him of the honour of originality in this respect by making him the disciple of Vishnuswāmi. Vishnuswāmi, as will be seen later, was the promulgator of the fourth Vaishnava sect, which has Rādhā-Krishna as its tutelary deity, and was a senior contemporary of Jñāneśvara, no doubt, but lived and preached at Vrindāvan.

With Rāmānanda, who was ordained into asceticism as a Vaishnava 'bairāgı' by an ascetic who belonged to the Rāmānuji sect Kāśī-Banaras comes into prominence as an unofficial centre of ascetics. To Rāmānanda goes the credit of installing Rāma as personal God and tutelary deity, and to the sub-sect inspired by him, the honour of having the largest ascetic membership and the biggest contingent of the militant ascetics. Rāmānanda lived in the reign of Ghiyasuddin Taghluk, from whom he is believed to have succeeded in getting a number of concessions for the Hindus who were sorely pressed. After Gorakhnātha, he is the first great

ascetic hailing from North India. It will not be too much to trace the origin of the great book *Rāma-carita-mānasa* of Tulasīdāsa to Rāmānanda's work in favour of Rāma as a personal deity. Rāma was long ago accepted as an incarnation of Vishnu. Kālidāsa in his *Raghuvaṁśa* testifies to it.

The earliest reference to the Rāma idol is met with in Varāhamihira's *Bṛhat-Saṁhitā* (LVIII–30) ascribed to the 6th century A. D. But the context in which the making of the idol is described, combined with the fact that no details either about the body colour or the number of limbs or the dress or the weapons, associated with or peculiar to the idol, have been given, clearly indicates that Rāma's statue was made as that of a deified hero and not necessarily as that of a deity. It is Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, whose idol Varāhamihira prescribes should be made of one hundred and twenty 'angulas'. Similarly the idol of Bali, the son of Virocana – the demon whom Vishnu in his Dwarf incarnation is said to have vanquished and sent to the nether world—was to be of the same dimensions. Varāhamihira, having laid down his instructions for the idols or statues of these two persons in this bald manner, states that other idols should never exceed one hundred and eight 'angulas'. Immediately thereafter he gives full instructions about the idol of 'Lord Vishnu'. He prescribes not only the body colour and the dress but also lays down instructions about the pose of hands according as the idol is two-handed or four-handed. Then he prescribes details about Balarāma's idol. And Krishna's idol comes in incidentally as an accompaniment of the idols of Balarāma and of a Goddess, who holds a book, 'pustaka', and a lotus in her hands. Then the making of the idol not only of Krishna's son Sāmba but also of the latter's son Pradyumna is prescribed. To us it is clear from this context that Rāma's idol, though bigger than any other idol excepting that of Bali, was, like that of Bali, the statue of a deified hero.

R. G. Bhandarkar[27] has stated that Amitagati, a Jain author, speaks, in a work of A. D. 1014, of Rāma being regarded as the

all-knowing, all-pervading protector of the world. He mentions also that Madhva-Ānandatīrtha is traditionally represented as having brought the image of Digvijaya Rāma from Badarikāśrama and as having sent his pupil Narahari Tīrtha to Jagannatha Puri to bring what were regarded as the original idols of Rāma and Sītā. There is another version about the bringing of the latter idols. Narahari Tīrtha is said to have obtained from the then king of Kalinga "certain very ancient and sacred, though neglected, images of Rāma and Sītā, which he delivered to Shri Madhva a few days before the latter's death."[28] This version is very significant in its reference to the idols as being neglected. The reference to these idols, however, the one from Badri being only of Rāma unaccompanied by Sītā and that from Orissa or Kalinga as of Rāma with Sīta, shows that the Rāma cult had not yet completely stereotyped the idol of its tutelary deity. It should be noted that most of the later idols current in Rāma cult have Rāma in the centre with his younger brother Lakṣmaṇa to his right and Sītā to his left. The reference to the Kalinga idols having been neglected indicates that the Rāma cult was not a strongly established one till then. The honour of resuscitating, and perhaps even founding the Rāma cult, thus goes to Rāmānanda.

Nimbārka, and even more so Vishnuswāmi, in emphasizing Rādhā-Krishna cult had, it seems, given currency under religious garb to the dalliance of Krishna. The revival of interest in the incidents of Rāmā's life poetically described by Vālmiki in his Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa* ultimately culminated in the Hindi poem called *Rāma-caritamānasa* of Tulasīdāsa. It is noteworthy that popularly it is known as *Tulasi - Rāmāyaṇa* as opposed to *Vālmiki - Rāmāyaṇa.*

Again we have to turn South. And this time not only to come across a great ascetic but also to discover the first Hindu ascetic historically known to have wielded great political influence.

The great name of Mādhava Vidyāraṇya, the ascetic we have in view, has gathered round it a number of legends about literary and political achievements. So great was the impression that Vidyāraṇya made on his contemporaries and two or three later generations, that in these legends the activities and work of more individuals than one, who were senior or junior contemporaries of Vidyāraṇya, have come to be attributed to him. The older writers on Vijayanagar history following this confused account of Vidyāraṇya's life credited him with an important role in the founding of the city of Vijayanagar and in the prominence and prosperity of the Sangam dynasty. Later scholars have found it necessary to reject these claims on behalf of Vidyāraṇya's role in the rise of Sangam dynasty. However, it is clear that Vidyāraṇya did serve as a minister to either a local branch of the Vijayanagar house or to a provincial Governor under it for some time. And it is abundantly clear beyond the shadow of doubt, that when Vidyāraṇya became the pontiff of the monastic centre at Śṛṅgeri he secured such great privileges and wealth for it that the later importance and prosperity of Śṛṅgeri Maṭha is credited to him.

If it has become clear that Vidyāraṇya was not concerned in the early rise of Vijayanagar and the Sangam dynasty, it is no less clear that the monastic centre at Śṛṅgeri under its then pontiff Vidyātīrtha took a very active part in sponsoring its cause. The role played by the Śṛṅgeri centre was so significant that the royal family changed its pupillary allegiance. Till the rise of the Sangam dynasty the official preceptors of the kings were the abbots of the Kālāmukha sect. After the coming into power of the Sangam dynasty, the pontiffs of the Sṛṅgeri Maṭha took their place. Though S. Srikantaya[29] has tried to restate the case in favour of Vidyāraṇya's role in the founding and rise of Vijayanagar, we feel convinced that the following observation of B. A. Saletore[30] appropriately sums up the true situation: "Nevertheless, from the very commencement of their career as conquerors, the sons of Sangam were deeply indebted to the wisdom, and perhaps

wealth too, of the Sṛṅgeri Maṭha, It is true that we are unable with the materials before us to trace the circumstances under which the preceptorship of the *gurus* of the line of Kriyasakti was exchanged for that of the priests of the Sṛṅgeri Maṭha..... ..It is quite likely that on the nearing of the completion of the capital in A. D. 1378, the Vijayanagar monarch gave further expression to his willingness to be guided this time by the *guru* of the Sṛṅgeri Maṭha. For, we believe that it was in this year A. D. 1378 that the services of Vidyaranya, who was then the minister to the son of Bukka, Yadugiri Virupanna, the Viceroy over Araja, were transferred to the emperor at Vijayanagar..... While the fact of Vidyāraṇya being the *guru* of Yadugiri Virupanna is thus confirmed, we are again in the dark as to the precise event that made Vidyaranya go to Vijayanagar. As regards the legend of his having helped Harihara in the construction of the capital..... we may dismiss it as an invention of a later age, realising nevertheless that popular fancy may have attributed to Mādhava Vidyāraṇya, because of his vast learning and wide celebrity, much of the credit, at least so far as the early days of the kingdom were concerned, which historically falls to the share of his learned and illustrious predecessor Vidyatirtha Swami."

Sadhus and asceticism made a definite departure from their strict theory of ascetic life in the lives of the Vaishnavite Rāmānanda of Banaras and the Śaivite Vidyātīrtha, the pontiff of Śṛṅgeri. Both of them considered it their duty, and bent their energies towards its performance, to rally round and defend Hinduism, the religion of their followers against the terrific onslaughts of Islam, which seemed not only bent for but also almost on the verge of success in swamping Hinduism. This marks a new departure in Indian Sadhuism. And it is remarkable that the political activity of both these great ascetics is almost exactly contemporaneous. If Vidyātīrtha secured political importance by sponsoring the cause of the Sangam dynasty and the founding of Vijayanagar in A. D. 1346, Rāmānanda, who was born in A. D.

1300, could not have achieved in northern India his success in the cause of Hinduism much earlier.

A little more than a century after Rāmānanda, we have evidence of a politically important ascetic from Rajput annals. About the middle of the 15th century A. D. there lived an ascetic in one of the caves of the mountains of Bakharchiriya in Mewad who wielded great influence and virtually founded the city of Jodhpur. The reputation that this ascetic had acquired for mystic knowledge and the great halo that had spread round him because of his austerities and his utter contempt for things of this world led Jodha, the famous scion of the Rathod Rajputs, who had left Kanauj, to consult him about the founding of a city in A.D. 1459. Unfortunately we are not told the name of this ascetic, who commanded Jodha to erect his fortress on 'the Hill of Strife' (Jodhagir), till then known as Bakharchiriya, 'the bird's nest'. It stood about four miles south of Mandor. Its position made it inaccessible and impregnable. Jodha's engineer in seeking convenient line of circumvallation found it necessary to include the spot of the hermitage within it. The ascetic in vain remonstrated for undisturbed possession of his retreat. Thus incensed the ascetic pronounced a curse that the place shall have only brackish water. Tod observes: "The memory of the Jogi is sanctified, though his anger compelled them to construct an apparatus, whereby water for the supply of garrison is elevated from a small lake at the foot of the rock, which, being entirely commanded from the walls, an assailant would find difficult to cut off." [31]

This Rao Jodha, the founder of Jodhpur, on another occasion during his exile, was fortunate to get help from another ascetic who, contrasting with the other ascetic who was indifferent to worldly affairs, was an active and militant leader of soldiers. He was a Rajput himself and his name was Harbuji Sankhla. He is immortalized in the panel of Rajput heroes sculptured on the walls of Mandor.[32] He it was who helped Rao Jodha to regain Mandor.

The circumstances under which this aid came to be secured and the description of some ascetic practices given by Col. Tod testify to the militancy and charity of certain ascetics in the middle of the 15th century. We shall quote here the whole passage because of its significance for ascetic militancy and philanthropy.

"Harbuji Sankhla, at once a soldier and a devotee, was one of those Rajput cavaliers '*sans peur et sans reproche*', whose life of celibacy and perilous adventure was mingled with the austere devotion of an ascetic; by turns aiding with his lance the cause which he deemed worthy, or exercising an unbounded hospitality towards the stranger. This generosity had much reduced his resources when Jodha sought his protection. It was the eve of the *Sada-bart*, one of those hospitable rites which, in former times, characterized Rajwara. This 'perpetual charity' supplies food to the stranger and traveller, and is distributed not only by individual chiefs and by the government, but by subscriptions of communities. Even in Mewar, in her present impoverished condition, the offerings to the gods in support of their shrines and the establishment of the *Sada-bart* were simultaneous. Hospitality is a virtue pronounced to belong more peculiarly to a semi-barbarous condition. Alas! for refinement and ultra-civilization, strangers to the happiness enjoyed by Harbuji Sankhla. Jodha with one hundred and twenty followers, came to solicit the 'stranger's fare': but unfortunately it was too late, the *Sada-bart* had been distributed. In this exigence, Harbuji recollected that there was a wood called *mujd*, used in dyeing, which among other things in the desert regions is resorted to in scarcity. A portion of this was bruised, and boiled with some flour, sugar, and spices, making altogether a palatable pottage; and with a promise of better fare on the morrow, it was set before the young Rao and his followers, who, after making a good repast, soon forgot Chitor in sleep. On waking, each stared at his fellow, for their mustachios were dyed with their evening's meal; but the old chief, who was not disposed to reveal his expedient, made it minister to their hopes by giving

it a miraculous character, and saying "that as the grey of age was thus metamorphosed into the tint of morn and hope, so would their fortunes become young, and Mandor again be theirs."[33]

The Rajasthan ascetics mentioned above came a century after Rāmānanda and commanded our attention, though their abiding influence or contribution to spiritual thought cannot be compared to that of Rāmānanda or any of the other ascetics mentioned so far. They are almost an aberration. In a remarkable way they foreshadow the later period of Rajput history, hallowed by the name of Chhatrasāl Bundela and his ascetic companion and adviser Prāṇnātha. It speaks for the hostile conditions prevalent in northern India that another century should elapse before the Rajasthan ascetics are eclipsed by an outstanding ascetic personality. In south India from the time of Rāmānuja, whose mid-year of life-activity was A. D. 1070, to that of Vishnuswāmi and Jñāneś-vara, the half a dozen important ascetic personalities that appeared on the scene did so at an interval of between ten to sixty years.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, a Bengali by birth, is that outstanding personality that forces our attention back to Banaras. He represents a unique combination of great learning, superior powers of Sanskritic exposition, quickness of appreciation of the contemporary scene, readiness to meet the challenge and the appropriate capacity to organize for the purpose. Madhusūdana, who was born in A. D. 1540, early in his life moved to Banaras and was ordained into asceticism there by one Viśveśvara Sarasvatī. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's work on the philosophical side is represented by his book *Advaitasiddhi*, which attempts to parry all attacks on monistic Vedanta made by Indian philosophers from Rāmānuja onwards. After Jñāneśvara, who in his daily devotional practice became a Vaishnavite of the local school and either started or strengthened further development in the school, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī is unique among monistic Vedantists to have profound faith in and to plead the cause of Vaishnavite devotion centred

round Krishna. This trend of his is the more particularly remarkable as Banaras before his time and for long ages back was principally a Śaivite centre. It was only secondarily that Rāmānuji Vaishnavism was represented in that city. Rāmānanda who made Banaras famous for Vaishnavism centred his devotion round Rāma. Between him and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī no great ascetic or preacher is known to have sponsored the cause of Krishna in that city.

Tulasīdāsa, who was born in A. D. 1532 and thus was a few years senior to Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, is said to have begun the composition of his great work *Rāmacaritamānasa* at Ayodhya in A. D. 1574. It seems he moved to Banaras some time thereafter and completed his work there. Till his death in A. D. 1623 he lived in Banaras. R. G. Bhandarkar informs us that his path of devotion, centred round Rāma, is "based upon a dualistic philosophy with a leaning towards spiritual monism of Advaita system."[34] Thus the great spiritual influence at work in Banaras during Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's time was the school of devotion to Rāma. And Madhusūdana Sarasvatī himself not only knew but also greatly admired Tulasīdāsa, whom he has pithily described as 'the mobile tree in the forest of Ānanda'. 'Forest of Ānanda' is the translation of Sanskrit 'Ānandakānana'; and 'Ānandakānana' was that part of Banaras where both Tulasīdāsa and Madhusūdana lived at that time. It speaks for the great independence and originality of mind of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, that living under such environment he did not only sturdily keep the banner of monistic Vedanta or Advaitism flying high but also raised another in the form of devotion to the personal God Krishna which he described as elixir.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī is said to have been present at the court of Akbar joining in the discussion of his universal religion. As we shall see later J. N. Farquhar discovered a tradition current among ascetics ascribing to Madhusūdana Sarasvatī the creation

of the militant section among ascetics. We shall show that though that tradition may not be taken as wholly correct it must have grown around the fact that Madhusūdana reorganized the existing militant ascetics to counteract the onslaughts of the Islamic 'Fakirs'. The life of Madhusūdana, who relinquished his body in A. D. 1623, demonstrates the looseness characterizing the organization not only of lay Hindu religionists but also of their ascetics. He does not seem to have been known in south India in his time. Neither was he invited to occupy any of the pontifical seats nor does it appear that disciples gathered round him in numbers to carry forward his tradition.

Rāmadāsa (1608-1682) forms the next land-mark in Indian Sādhuism. A Maharashtrian that he was he came of a family which was a follower of the Madhva sect of Vaishnavism. He is said to have fled away from the marriage pandal when his marriage was being celebrated. His original name was Nārāyaṇa; and he later assumed the name Rāmadāsa. He was an extra-ordinary personality and not having been regularly initiated into asceticism, he thought himself so ordained by his tutelary deity Rāma himself. His mission was political, based on social solidarity. In order to fight the Islamic onslaught that was threatening the Hindu culture in Maharashtra at that time, not only did he preach to the people unity and resistance but he also founded fourteen monastic centres at different places in Maharashtra to enable him to organize the people for resistance through his ascetic disciples. He started a new sect in Maharashtra and cultivated the school of Rāma worship. While Rāma worship has become a feature of Maharashtrian culture, the Rāmadāsi ascetic sect is a negligible force. Though his organizing work did not last long and might not have had much success even during his life-time, his connection with Shivaji, the great Maratha leader, is worthy of note. Dennis Kincaid[35] observes: 'As soon as he heard of him, Shivaji wrote to Ramdas, who replied, as Tukaram had done, with a poem. But,

while Tukaram sang the praises of obscurity Ramdas acclaimed, as though with a flourish of trumpets, the new hero-king who would free the Hindus. With the poem he sent a present of a handful of earth, of pebbles and of horse-dung. Shivaji was sitting with his mother when this unusual gift arrived. Jijabai, for all her religious enthusiasm, was a literal-minded woman. Indignantly she stared at Ramdas' present and asked if this was a proper thing to send to a gentleman. But Shivaji, after a moment's thought, said, "It is a symbol and a prophecy. The earth means that I shall conquer all this land. The pebbles are the fortresses with which I shall hold it, and the horse-dung signifies my cavalry for which I shall become famous."

The socio-political work of Rāmdāsa was a concrete index of the new trend in Indian asceticism which Rāmadāsa inculcated in his thought system. He wanted an ascetic to take the leadership of society not only to enable him to propagate religious doctrines but also to make it possible for him to preserve the ethico-social order and to promulgate works of public utility. First having described bad conduct and its basic lore he details what is good conduct and what is proper lore. Good conduct and proper lore prescribe not only morality, humility, courage, outspokenness but also suavity, charity and group-consciousness. Such proper lore and good conduct, he asserts, is possible to be cultivated by all and ought to be so cultivated by an ascetic. He exhorts an ascetic to carry on propaganda through oratory to stabilize spirituality. He should not only expound philosophical texts but also should propagate devotion to God through his popular religious discourses. All the same and in spite of his asceticism, he should consistently conduct his daily worship, his daily muttering, and his daily meditation in strict conformity with the rules of ceremonial purity. He should practise austerity and should also go on pilgrimages. He should seek out ascetics, saints and other good men and make friends with them. And strange as it may appear, he exhorts his ascetic to beautify various places.

Needless to say the ascetic is enjoined to look upon people at large as his own.[36]

Brahmendra Sarasvatī, or Brahmendraswāmi Dhāvadśikar as he is known, though he came to Satara in about 1680 A. D. appears to have taken his permanent residence at Paraśurām near Chiplun ten years after Rāmadāsa passed away. He was an extraordinary child of an old couple which was eking out its bare existence in Berar. He was born in 1649. His parents passed away when he was only twelve years old, but the extraordinary boy managed to reach Kāśi within about three or four years of that event. There he contacted the then well-known Dasanāmi ascetic Jñānendra Sarasvatī, and succeeded in due course in getting himself ordained as a Paramahamsa ascetic. Thenceforward he came to be known as Brahmendra Sarasvatī or Brahmendraswāmi. He is called Dhāvadśikara because in the latter part of his life he settled down at Dhavadśi in the district of Satara. During his long life which ended in A. D. 1738, he wielded great influence over Maharashtra politics and consequently on Indian history. But the role that he played can be and has been easily exaggerated. On the other hand, if attention is concentrated on his petty demands and slanderous remarks about some political personalities one can easily condemn him in strong terms. This course was adopted by the well-known historian of the Maratha period V. K. Rajwade[37] whose estimate of Brahmendraswāmi almost amounts to dubbing him an unadulterated scoundrel. G. S. Sardesai [38], another noted historian, does not go so far but describes Brahmendra as a mediocre who dabbled in Maratha politics with no advantage to the nation.

It is quite true that many of the letters written by this Paramahamsa ascetic–not only those to his noble and royal male disciples but also to some of his female disciples–make sorry reading. Some of them in their abusive tone are unworthy not only of a Paramahamsa ascetic but also of a gentleman. While adjudging

such letters, however, one must bear in mind the manners of his time. Let it be remembered that such a saintly man as Tukāram, who was at most only a generation older than Brahmendra, uses abusive language in some of his poems–abhaṅga's–which were public utterances and not private correspondence. As against Brahmendra's demands for various goods for his personal comfort must be set the great public utility works that he carreid out. Not only did he renovate or build many temples but also he got a number of tanks and wells dug out in different places and at least at one place had a bridge constructed for the convenience of the public. And however he might appear to Rajwade and others who read his letters at the end of the 19th century or the beginning of the 20th, to many of his high-placed disciples he was no doubt a veritable source of inspiration.[39] Particularly relevant is the high testimony borne by Chimnaji Appa, the valiant military leader. It is absolutely clear from his correspondence[40] that he was sustained in his military endeavour to wrest Vasai (Bassein) from the Portuguese by his faith in Brahmendra's blessing that he would succeed in his venture.

A little earlier than Brahmendra, as noted above, Prāṇnātha, the founder of the Vaishnava Dhāmi sect, played an even more militant role in connection with Raja Chhatrasāl's effort to keep his Bundelkhand free from Muslim molestation. Raja Chhatrasāla was the junior contemporary of Shivaji and the senior one of Bajirao I.

About two generations later, according to Bankimchandra Chatterjee, the famous nineteenth century Bengali litterateur, in Bengal the Santāna sect, under the leadership of its asectic order concentrated in Ānandanāṭha, carried on political and military activity to relieve the distress of the Hindu population groaning under the yoke of the declining Muslim rule.[41]

Asceticism or Sadhuism may be said to have come of age and to have got ready to step forward to undertake active social work.

Samnyasis or Saiva Ascetics

INDIAN Sadhus, outside Jainism, fall into two large categories according to their main affiliation to either of the two great sectarian divisions among the Hindus. Sādhus owing some kind of allegiance to Vaishnavism are commonly known as Bairāgis. Those paying homage to Śiva are Samñyāsis par excellence. Jogis or Yogis, no doubt, worship some form of Śiva; but they are generally known as Jogis. There are small miscellaneous sects with their ascetic or Sādhu sections, which may be separately treated.

Strictly speaking, a 'Samnyāsi' is a person who has renounced the world at the last stage of his worldly life after having fulfilled its duties proper to the earlier life. Any one who renounced his interests in worldly affairs and led a celibate life without ever having entered the life of a householder was known generally as a Brahmacāri and more specifically as a Naiṣṭhika Brahmacāri. But in course of time this distinction was lost and the word Samnyasi came to be applied to all ascetics who renounced the world.

Asceticism was early associated with Śaivism. Śiva has been described not only as a Mahāyogi as Krishna is called Yogīśvara but also as a great ascetic. Though he has a consort, his wife Pārvati or Umā, though he has a son or two attributed to him in mythology, yet he is described as a Tyāgi par excellence, as one without possessions, as one having matted hair, with his body besmeared

with ashes and as one very fond of visiting or even living on cremation-grounds. The earliest known ascetics – and we must bear in mind the distinction between a hermit or an anchorite on the one hand and an ascetic or a mendicant monk on the other – appear to have been all Śaivites. Vaishnava ascetics begin to figure only after Rāmānuja, who lived in the 11th century. A. D.

Samnyāsis are sometimes known as Gosāis. The word Gosāi, really speaking, has no opprobrious implication, meaning as it does, one who has control over his senses. But in popular parlance, more often than not, it is used in a derogatory sense, and has come to be commonly applied to Jogis or Nāthapanthi Sādhus, and only to one or two orders of Samnyāsis, which recruit non-Brahmins.

Samnyāsis are generally[1] classified as (1) Dasanāmis; (2) Daṇḍis; (3) Paramahamsa; and (4) Brahmacāris. But this classification is based on confusion of ideas. It is clear from the accounts of Samnyāsis collected by us that there is only one school of Samnyāsis, which has ten orders. And that is known as Dasanāmis.

Daṇḍi means one who has a staff (daṇḍa). According to the Dharmaśāstras even an initiated student, a Brahmacāri, had to carry a staff (daṇḍa), which he discarded on his leaving the house of his teacher. But a Brahmacāri is not described in the Dharma literature as a Daṇḍin. On the other hand, in describing a person who has entered the fourth stage of life, the Samnyāsāśrama, Manu[2] not only speaks of him as Yati, but also calls him a Daṇḍi, one with a staff, just as he calls him a Pātrī, one with a begging bowl. The staff as a characteristic of an ascetic is definitely very much older than Manusmṛti. Patanjali has remarked in one place[3] as follows: "Just as one on seeing smoke issuing from a particular place infers that there is fire in that place, similarly one seeing a staff (triviṣṭabdhaka) infers an ascetic (Parivrājaka)". In Patanjali's time a staff was a sufficient characteristic of an ascetic. This statement of Patanjali's is very valuable, for a staff being

considered as a specific index of an ascetic, because in another place[4] he takes care to warn against using the characteristic of a staff for explaining the word 'maskarin' to mean an ascetic, though 'maskara' means bamboo.

In this connection it is necessary to refer to the word 'Tridaṇḍi' which literally means one with three staves. It is a term which is generally applied to Vaishnava ascetics. In distinction to a 'Tridaṇḍi' ascetic, a 'Daṇḍi' is very often referred to as 'Ekaḍaṇḍi', 'one having only one staff'. Not only some Śaiva Samnyāsis, who can claim to be Daṇḍis by their characteristics, but also ascetics of the Vaishnava sect of Madhva are thus designated. Farquhar[6] informs us that both these expressions, 'Ekadaṇḍi' and 'Tridaṇḍi' occur in the *Mahābhārata*. We have not been able to trace the former of these. The latter expression namely 'Tridaṇḍi' occurs in connection with Arjuna's abduction of Subhadrā, but only in the Kumbhakonam edition of the *Mahābhārata* and in the *Bhāgavata*. Arjuna is represented as having adopted the 'tridaṇḍi' variety of renunciation and settled down near Dwarka, the home of Subhadrā. This is undoubtedly the first imposter ascetic known to Hindu society. The 'tridaṇḍi' variety of asceticism was the only respectable form that could have enabled Arjuna to impose upon Subhadrā's elder brother and by gaining access to the palace to achieve his purpose of abducting Subhadrā. It is clear from the episode that the particular form of asceticism had reference to rules of observance, one of them being perfect silence. Manu[6] has stated that a 'tridaṇḍi' is one who has controlled his body, speech and mind with the help of intellect. It thus appears that the 'daṇḍa' connoted by that word in the expressions 'Daṇḍin', 'Ekadaṇḍin' and 'Tridaṇḍin' was a particular rule of conduct and observance rather than a material staff. Hence 'Daṇḍis' are samnyāsis who observe a particular rule of going through a particular discipline or those who have arrived at a particular stage of ascetic development. And as such any Samnyāsi belonging to any one of the ten orders of the Dasanāmis can be

designated a 'Daṇḍi', provided he fulfils the conditions. 'Daṇḍis' are thus not a separate order ór class of Samnyāsis. In actual practice it would appear that it is only the Brāhmin ascetics, who belong to one of the four orders of the Dasanāmis, namely Āśrama, Bhāratī, Sarasvatī and Tīrtha, that are thus designated, and required to carry a staff or 'daṇḍa' to symbolize their status. The staff as a symbol, however, is important, and carries with it a guarantee of a particular set of observances as will be clear from the case of 'Karapātri' Mahārāj which we note below.

Paramahamsas are not a separate class of Samnyāsis. As a matter of fact, as Oman[7] observes, ascetics whether Śaiva or Vaishnava, who have undergone a probation of at least twelve years, can become Paramahamsas. According to one account which we have been able to collect, Paramahamsas are ascetics, belonging to any one of the ten orders of the Dasanāmis, who are usually progressive and who consider themselves as above a number of rules of observance and behave so. For example, they not only are prepared to act as teachers and leaders of the Nāgā or the naked sub-section of the Dasanāmis but also dine in the same row with them. The Daṇḍis refuse to do these things. Paramahamsa ascetics are generally preachers and teachers; and quite a number of them wander about in the company of their students and disciples. The status of asceticism connoted by the term Paramahamsa is the highest and the most coveted of all. A Paramahamsa is believed to have attained such a stage of self-knowledge that routine distinctions and observances of the mundane world are not binding on him. He is believed to be so perfect in self-control that nothing can disturb him. He is so pure that nothing can contaminate him. Even the doctrinal differences between Śaivism and Vaishnavism stand dissolved in him. Paramahamsas are generally great scholars well-versed in Sanskrit learning.

In recent and contemporary asceticism, Paramahamsa is the

only category that has kept its continuity intact from the time of the *Jābālopaniṣad* onwards. As already mentioned, the earliest reference to varieties of ascetics other than Paramahamsa is found in the *Mahābhārata*[8]. And out of the four varieties mentioned there, Paramahamsa is the last. The other three varieties have been conspicuous by their absence even from the time of the great Śankarācārya. The variety of Paramahamsa ascetic is one of the three varieties mentioned in the *Jābālopaniṣad*. The other two varieties named in the *Jābālopaniṣad* are different from those mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. The *Bhikṣukaupaniṣad*, on the other hand, mentions the same four varieties of ascetics as the *Mahābhārata*. So does also the *Āśramopaniṣad* and the *Hārītasmṛti*.[9] The *Nāradaparivrājakopaniṣad*[10] mentions among its six kinds of ascetics Hamsa and Paramahamsa, which are the third and the fourth varieties of the *Mahābhārata* list.

The term Paramahamsa is rather intriguing in its signification. Particularly is this so because in a number of lists it is preceded by the term Hamsa. There can hardly be any doubt that Paramahamsa is a term compounded of the two terms 'parama' and 'Hamsa'. Hamsa is thus the basic term. The pair of terms Hamsa and Paramahamsa raises to one's consciousness the pair of terms 'ātman' and 'paramātman' so famous in Hindu philosophy. In the whole Hindu ideology 'hamsa' stands for purity. It is par excellence the discriminator. Might it have stood for that state of self-realization where the individual by his ascetic practices has attained to that stage of discrimination where he can distinguish the spiritual essence of his soul from its material trappings? If so, then Paramahamsa would naturally mean an ascetic or a person who having realized the identity of the individual soul with the supreme soul could be called the supreme discriminator. In one verse of the *Ṛgveda*, which also occurs in the *Kāṭhakopaniṣad*[11], there occurs the expression *'hamsah śuciṣad'*, which, though not

very clear, may be taken to imply from the context that, whatever hamsa may mean, it has reference both to stability and purity.

In the *Jābāla* and *Bhikṣuka-Upaniṣads* occur lists of Paramahamsas. In one list there are nine names and in the other eight. The names common to the two lists are Saṁvartaka, Aruṇi, Śvetaketu, Jaḍabharata and Dattātreya. It is very interesting to note that there is an Upaniṣad called *Dattātreyopaniṣad.* In it an attempt is made to give the etymology of the word Dattātreya. The 'da' of Dattātreya is equated with 'hamsa'. In fact, the tutelary deity of the Junā or Bhairava Ākhāḍā of the Nāgās is Dattātreya, who is worshipped in all its centres. The centre of this ākhāḍā at Ujjain is named after that deity. According to Wilson, the different orders of Samnyāsis hold in high veneration Dattātreya besides Śankara, the organizer of the orders. Though Dr. Chapekar's investigation did not reveal this fact as such, yet the usual saying among ascetics that 'renunciation began with Datta' (Dattase Samnyāsa calā) corroborates the general import. This opinion about Dattātreya's connection with asceticism is also vouchsafed in a Sanskritic source called *Śivaśatarudrasaṁhitā.*[12]

Dattātreya figures in the Puraṇas as one of the incarnations of Vishnu. In the *Bhāgavata* and the *Mahābhārata* he appears as the sixth incarnation, while in the *Brahmāṇḍa* and the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇas,* he takes the fourth rank.[13] In the *Sisupālavadha*[14] of Māgha, Dattātreya is referred to as the fourth or the fifth incarnation of Vishnu. In the *Naiṣadhīyacarita*[15] on the other hand, Śrī Harṣa represents him as the tenth incarnation. In the *Upaniṣad* of his name, he is described as the son of Atri and Anusūyā and called both a 'mahāyogin' and an 'avadhūta'. It is interesting to note that he is considered to constitute 'cit', consciousness, 'ānanda', bliss, and 'sat', truth. His description as one wearing an attire like that of a child, of a madman and of a ghost is in consonance with Paramahamsahood as described in the

late Upaniṣads and foreshadows his connection with 'Yogis' in a rather unenviable aspect.

Leaving these traditional and semi-mythical names of Paramahamsas as shadowy, we may mention that the poet Bhavabhūti's teacher named Jñānanidhi is the first of the historically known Paramahamsas.[16] According to Ānandagiri's account the great Śankarācārya was straightway ordained as a Paramahamsa.[17] The latest and the greatest of the past Paramahamsas, is of course Śri Rāmakrishna, the spiritual preceptor of Swāmi Vivekānanda. Among the living Paramahamsas may be mentioned Swāmi Śivanda of Hrishikesh, Swāmi Maheśvarānanda and Swāmi Bhagavatānanda of Hardwar, Swāmi Vidyānanda of Ahmedabad and Swāmi Gangeśvarānanda of Vrindavan. It must be observed that none of these is a properly accredited Vaishnavite. We have come across a sub-order of ascetics which styles itself Kabīr Paramahamsa but we have not included the ascetics of that order in our description of the Paramahamsas as Vaishnavite Paramahamsas because, though they acknowledge their connection with Kabīr, their tenets and practices show hardly any trace of Vaishnavism. There are very few Vaishnava Sadhus who are styled Paramahamsas.

The Hamsa ascetics were enjoined not to reside for more than one night in a village, or for more than five nights in a town or for more than seven nights in a field. They had to eat cowdung and drink cow-urine and had to follow the Cāndrāyaṇa vow in respect of their meal, decreasing its quantity with the waning of the moon. The *Jābālopaniṣad* describes the Paramahamsas as being without any indicative signs (avyaktaliṅga), without any settled mode of life (avyaktācāra) and as behaving like madmen, though not insane. They should have thrown their three staves, their water-bowl, their net-work bag, their water-strainer, their hair-tuft and their sacred thread into water, offering them as oblations to it. In this state the ascetic returns

to his form at birth, free from ties, namely of the pairs of opposites, like pleasure and pain, devoid of all possessions, very well started on the path of self-realization and consequently pure in mind. Only for the keeping of body and soul together this free individual, endowed with complete equanimity towards gain and loss, should beg for alms with his stomach as his alms-bowl. It is noteworthy that in this Upaniṣad passage the Paramahamsa is described as 'udarapātra', 'udara' meaning stomach. It is very difficult to understand how one can use one's stomach as a bowl to contain the beggings. The expression, therefore, must be taken to enjoin that a Paramahamsa should accept as much beggings as will fill his stomach and no more. He has to ensure that he has not accepted anything more than just the quantity required to fill his stomach. This he can do in the first instance by not using any bowl as a receptacle for his alms. Further, he can fill his belly by accepting the alms in the hollowed palms of his hand. A Paramahamsa thus has to be in reality a 'karapātri', one using his hand as his bowl, and only metaphorically an 'udarapātri', one using his stomach as his bowl. In *Nāradaparivrājakopaniṣad* he is described as one who has no other alms-bowl except his own hands.[18]

It speaks volumes for the continuity of tradition that there is at present one Paramahamsa ascetic who is usually addressed and referred to as Karapātri Mahārāj, without any other appellation prefixed or suffixed. Originally he was a 'Daṇḍi' and gave up his 'daṇḍa', when he thought he had attained sufficient self-realization to justify him to behave in the free manner of a Paramahamsa. He organized the Rāmarājya Pariṣad. This political organization is typical of resurgent orthodox Hinduism. It put up its own candidates for a number of seats at the last general election. Karapātri Mahārāj, even though he was a leader, soon found that his renunciation of the staff and his adoption of the Paramahamsa appellation led to a serious diminution of his influence among his former associates, the orthodox Daṇḍi ascetics. The Daṇḍi ascetics

came to look upon him more as an apostate than as a reformer.

A Paramahamsa has to reside in vacant houses or temples, in thickets of grass, under the shelter of ant-hills, at the root of trees, in a pot-factory, in the hall of sacrificial fire, on the banks of a river, in mountain caves, in the hollow of a tree or in a deserted plain. Even at the spots enumerated, he should not have a permanent abode. He should not strive for anything. He should have no attachments. He should meditate on the pure Spirit and being intent on uprooting all evil actions should be standing firm in the Self. One who leaves his body in this state of renunciation is a Paramahamsa indeed.

Farquhar[19] has stated that there have always been a few Samnyāsis who have lived stark naked and spent much of their time in lonely forest and that they have been known as Digambaras after the style of their Jain name-sakes. He further observed in A. D. 1925 that there were still living a few Digambaras in the monastery at Śṛṅgeri. We have not been able to verify these statements; and Dr. Chapekar's visit to a large number of monasteries and places of pilgrimage did not reveal a single Digambara ascetic. Nor did Dr. Chapekar gather, from his conversations with numerous ascetics and leaders of monasteries, the impression that there are such. Farquhar has instanced Bhāskarānanda Sarasvatī who left his material body at Banaras in 1899. J. C. Oman[20] who visited Bhāskarānanda Sarasvatī at Banaras in A. D. 1895 saw him naked, and states that when he called on the ascetic, the latter wrapped a loin-cloth and thereafter stepped forward to receive him. Jadunath Sarkar has published in his *Nāgā-Sammyāsiyoṅkā Itihāsa* a photo of an 'ākhāḍā' in which there is a whole row of stark naked ascetics.

In one of the Upaniṣad passages referred to above, Dattātreya who figures as a Paramahamsa in two Upaniṣadic lists of Paramahamsas is described as an Avadhūta. Dr. Chapekar discovered at Hrishikesh, one of the most celebrated centres of Hindu orthodoxy and

religious tradition, and an important centre of monastic orders, that the term 'avadhūta', 'one who has dispelled all imperfections', is applied to a Paramahamsa ascetic. On further inquiry he found that it was rather loosely used for any ascetic who was believed to be or who had a right to be above all rules of observance. It is more appropriately confined to designate those of the Dasanāmi Nāgās who are entitled to it by their seniority. They may be stark naked or may use a small strip of cloth to cover their privities. But they wear matted hair and are not shaved. They may wear a necklace of Rudrāksha beads or one even of bones. Their indifference to rules of observance may carry them to the extreme of taking intoxicating drink and eating meat. Though in the *Nāradaparivrājakopaniṣad*, where this category of ascetics occurs as one of the two categories additional to the standard four of the *Mahābhārata*, an 'avadhūta' is described as one having no restrictions and as eating his meals like a big python from all except the out-castes, the implication clearly is that meat and drink were two of the restrictions. Perhaps it is the influence of the life of other orders, particularly the Jogis, that is responsible for the use of meat and drink by some of the Samnyāsi ascetics. Even among the Avadhūtas, there are further distinctions as Brahma Avadhūta, Śiva Avadhūta, Bhakta Avadhūta and Hamsa Avadhūta. Swami Ramananda Samnyāsi has recorded that there are female ascetics of this variety and are known as Avadhūtanīs.[21] The very fact that Avadhūtas base their practice of asceticism on the Tantras, which they consider as the fifth Veda, supports our contention mentioned above. Kānphāṭā Jogis among Śaiva ascetics and Rāmānandis among Vaishnava frequently employ the term 'avadhūta' for their ascetics.

Wilson[22] has noted the existence of Sanjogi 'atīta's with an ascetic as well as a householder section. He further states that Nāgā section of the Śaiva ascetics is formed chiefly of the refuse of the Daṇḍi and Atīta classes who have no inclination for a life of study. Crooke includes them under Sanjogi and gives their

as recorded in the Census of what is to-day the Uttar Pradesh. Under a special article on Atīts he says that Samnyāsi Atīts are contrasted with 'gharbāri' or householder Atīts and though the latter are described as Śaiva Hindus they are saluted by other people with the invocation 'Namo Nārāyaṇāya', bow to Nārāyaṇa[23]. The *Nārada-parivrājakopaniṣad* lists 'Turīyātīta' as the fifth class of ascetics above that of the Paramahamsas. It describes a 'Turīyātīta' (Turīya+atīta) as one who eats with his mouth without using his hands and that, too, fruits. He is described, therefore, as far as his food habits are concerned, as a cow-mouthed one. If he wants to eat corn he may beg it only from three houses. He must have no belongings except his body and is consequently naked. He regards his body as a corpse. It is clear from this description that Atīts are not like Avadhūtas, who are described as boas, enjoined to lie at one place and eat whatever is received.

The description of an Atīta hermit given by Col. Tod[24] at about the beginning of the second quarter of the last century gains in interest. He speaks of several caves or 'guphās' near Mandor as being the abode of Atīta hermits. He thus speaks of his discovery of the Atīta: "Having walked out on the terrace or house-top of the palace, to catch a sun-beam and scare away an ague which tormented me, I discovered one of these animals coiled up on a heap of bats' dung in a corner of an apartment of the palace. He was dreadfully emaciated, and but for the rolling of a pair of eyes in a visage covered with hair, there was nothing which betokened animation, much less humanity. There was none but the bat to dispute his reign, or the spider which weaves its web in this palace of the Cæsars. I had no inclination to disturb the process of ratiocination, or to ask to which sect of philosophers belonged this Diogenes of Mandor, who might, if he had utterance, have desired me to walk downstairs, and not intercept the sun-beam for whose warmth we were competitors." He speaks of 'Atīta' monastery near Bhainsror, referring to its Mahanta and inmates.

His description of them as matted, besmeared with ashes, and wearing only a strip of a cloth could apply almost to any Samnyāsi. He found the Mahanta quite talkative and highly informative.[25]

Today we do not come across the use of term 'atīta' among Śaiva ascetics. Hardly need we point out that 'atīta' is not a separate order or class of Samnyāsis unless we consider that section of the Samnyāsis which is held in light esteem as one. For Farquhar[26] has stated that those six orders of the Dasanāmi Samnyāsis in which Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas were enlisted are looked upon as impure and styled Atīta.

Of the four āśramas or stages of life, that of the Brahmacāri is by all accounts the oldest known. It connotes primarily the period of studenthood. As such it was only the first stage of life and could not have been an end in itself. The term 'naiṣṭhika brahmacārin' signifying one who keeps celibate and keeps up his studenthood for life comes into use later. It was after one of the later Upaniṣads proclaimed that one could go forth as a wanderer renouncing the world at any stage when one felt the urge for renunciation that this term was applied to those persons who straightway became ascetics without entering the householder's stage of life. Long before this usage and phenomenon, it appears, however, there were well-known personages who were known to be Brahmacāris for life. Some of them were considered to have eternal life. The most famous and the earliest of them, as already noted, were Sanatkumāra, Nārada, Sanaka, Sanatsujāta and Sanandana. Technically they could not be called Samnyāsis and they have never been so described. Among moderns, the great Śankaracārya himself could have been described as the greatest of them but for the fact that another ascetic Govindapādācārya, who was himself the disciple of the great ācārya Gauḍapāda, is traditionally known to have formally initiated him into Samnyāsa. Jñānadeva *alias* Jñāneśvara is actually the greatest of such among moderns.

It would be utterly wrong to recognize Brahmacāris as a separate class of Samnyāsis as Wilson[27] does or even as Oman[28] has it. Śankarācārya while putting the order of Samnyāsis on a proper basis is believed to have recognized a class of novitiates attached to each one of his four great monasteries. They are called Brahmacāris and serve as ministers and helpers to the senior Śamnyāsis. In spite of this subordinate nature of their duties, from the information gathered by us. we are in a position to state that the Brahmacāris at the four monasteries have different appellations, indicative of their stage of self-realization. It will be seen that the realization indicated by their name in each case refers to only one aspect of the Supreme Self. Svarūpa Brahmacāri means one who knows his own self. The second appellation is Prakāśa Brahmacāri meaning one who knows and realizes the self as light. One who delights in the realization of the self and feels the consequent bliss is Ānanda Brahmacāri. The fourth appellation, namely Caitanya Brahmacāri, means one who realizes Brahma as consciousness. It is not quite clear from the information available whether the Brahmacāris continue to remain so and bear the same appellation throughout life. If it were so, then Oman would be justified in separating them as a distinct class of Samnyāsis. If not, Brahmacāris only represent a stage of asceticism and not a separate class of Samnyāsis.

There are other indications showing that in part at least the Brahmacāris are a separate class of Samnyāsis. There is one 'āśrama' of Brahmacāris on mount Girnar, one of the most famous places for all sorts of Samnyāsis to gather together. It is noteworthy that mount Girnar is one of the few places where there are the foot-prints of Dattātreya on a lonely splendid peak. They are believed to be his original foot-prints. The cult of Dattātreya, though he is looked upon as a patron deity by Samnyāsis, is not met with among the populace north of the Narmada. Every pilgrim, be he an ascetic or a householder when he visits mount Girnar does not return without paying his homage to the foot-

prints of Dattātreya. Significantly, the Brahmacāri āśrama is situated on the path to the Dattātreya peak, beyond the Jain temples but before the Gorakhnātha cave. When Dr. Chapekar visited the place, there were about twenty-five Brahmacāris in the āśrama.

Even stronger evidence than this for the existence of a class, which may properly be called Brahmacāri Samnyāsis as contrasted with the Dasanāmi Samnyāsis. is provided by their organization and the status it has received. The Sadhus have an organization which is designed to meet the needs of offence and defence against other orders and even against the civil authority if need be. One of the units in this organization is called an 'ākhāḍā'. The Brahmacāris have an 'ākhāḍā' which is called Agan and is separate and distinct from the six 'ākhāḍās' of the Dasanāmi Nāgā Samnyāsis. Agan is evidently a corrupt form of 'agni', meaning fire. At the famous assemblage of ascetics and others for the Kumbha-Melā, the Agan Ākhāḍa of Brahmacāris marches along with the 'ākhāḍās' of the Dasanāmi Samnyāsis.

They wear ochre-coloured clothes. They allow their hair on the head to grow and wear them matted in a crown. They do not discard their sacred thread.

Dasanamis or The Sankara School of Sadhus

Śankarācārya, as we are informed by his biographers, in the short span of his life put through an amazing amount of organizational work which is functioning even to-day. Himself an ascetic, who had renounced the world very early in life, he was convinced emotionally and philosophically of the need for renunciation. Individual renunciators were not lacking. There was no central authority to lay down and preach right principles of religion and philosophy. Buddhist and Jain monkhood, though later in origin than Hindu asceticism, was already organized. Śankarācārya, to whom is attributed the final defeat of Buddhism in India, was not slow to perceive the imperative need for monastic centres.

Śankarācārya selected four places in four different quarters, namely Badri in the north, Dwaraka in the west, Śṛṅgeri in the south and Puri in the east, for establishing monastic centres. The names of these monastic centres by which they are known are Jyotih or Joshi, Śāradā, Śṛṅgeri and Govardhan respectively. He organized the ascetics in ten orders and named them (1) Araṇya, (2) Āśrama, (3) Bhāratī, (4) Giri, (5) Parvata, (6) Puri, (7) Sarasvatī, (8) Sāgara, (9) Tīrtha and (10) Vana. Every Samnyāsi adds to his adopted name one of these ten terms as a suffix, the particular term depending on the centre at which he is initiated or to which he is attached and more specifically on the name of his preceptor. We do not know how it was exactly arranged in the beginning when Śankarācārya organized the orders. There are traditional explanations which we shall soon note. We know for certain that one

of the earliest Tīrtha ascetics was Madhvācārya, the founder of the Brahma sampradā of the Vaishnavas. He lived in the thirteenth century. His Samnyāsi name was Ānanda Tīrtha. His preceptor was a Tīrtha, and two or three successors of his known to tradition and recorded in an inscription[1] were Tīrthas, though they were the leaders of Vaishnava monasteries. We know a Giri ascetic in the person of Ānanda Giri, who wrote the life of Śankarācārya named *Śankaravijaya* and lived in the 11th or 12th century. The famous Mādhava of encyclopaedic learning flourished in the fourteenth century. Among other things he wrote a life of Śankarācārya called *Śaṅkaradigvijaya*. As he was an ascetic of the Araṇya order he styled himself Vidyāraṇya. The great Vedantic writer Madhusūdana who lived in the sixteenth century at Banaras, being an ascetic of the Sarasvatī order, has always been known as Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. Of the moderns, we have already referred to Bhāskarānanda Sarasvatī of Banaras and we would note here that the style of taking up a compound appellation of two words or two qualities is a new feature in Samnyāsi life. At least two of his famous contemporaries, one of them a junior, took up appellations connotative of two qualities. Of them one Dayānanda was a Sarasvatī ascetic and was formally known as Dayānanda Sarasvatī. Informally he was always called Swāmi Dayanānda. The great Vivekānanda was their junior contemporary. He was a Puri ascetic. Totā Puri was the spiritual preceptor of Rāmakrishna Paramahamsa. And Ramakrishna who was a Paramahamsa was never known as a Puri. But he was the spiritual preceptor of Vivekānanda. Vivekānanda was thus a Puri. But hardly ever has this ascetic surname been used in his case. The alignment of Bengal ascetics with Puri order appears to have been as old as asceticism in Bengal. For though Caitanya Mahāprabhu's Sampradāya is regarded as a branch of Mādhva Sampradāya he is known to have been guided by a Bhāratī and a Puri. The first monk that we know of in Bengal is Mādhavendra, who was formally known as Mādhava Puri.

Īśvara Puri who kindled Caitanya's spiritual fire, was the disciple of Mādhava Puri. Īśvara Puri seems to have initiated also Nityānanda, a close companion of Caitanya. Caitanya was, however, formally initiated into Samnyāsa in A. D. 1509 by one Keśava Bhāratī by dubbing him Krishna Caitanya.[2] Among the present heads of monasteries and great Samnyāsis, hardly is there one whose appellation is not composed of words for two qualities. Generally they are referred to without the use of their Samnyāsi surname. Rāma Tīrtha of the nineteenth century, Śarat Giri, the spiritual preceptor of the learned Paramahamsa Maheśvarānanda of Hardwar, and Nṛsimha Giri, the learned Paramahamsa of Delhi stand out in marked constrast.

As regards the traditional explanations of the Dasanāmi names, Araṇya indicates complete renunciation of mundane affairs. In another version, Araṇya is that Samnyāsi who always stands in the forest in perpetual bliss leaving this pleasurable world. Āśrama characterizes one who is free from the bonds of mundane existence and is confirmed in the 'samnyāsa āśrama'. In the alternative explanation one characteristic is added and that is freedom from the bother of wandering. Bhāratī means one who is fully laden with learning. This significance is amplified by the further specification that Bhāratī has thrown all burden away, not leaving the slightest burden of sorrow. Giri is one who lives in the forest, studies the *Bhagavadgītā*, is serene and steady like a mountain. One who lives in forest, and has steadfast knowledge regarding the transient nature of the mundane world is Parvata. The alternative explanation substitutes forest residence by habitation at the foot of hills. A Puri is full of real knowledge, has mastered the knowledge of Brahma and is therefore always in union with Parabrahma, the supreme soul. Puri ascetics would thus appear to be the highest stage of asceticism as far as its purpose and content are concerned. Sarasvatī has been a sort of a headache to traditional expositors. On the one hand, they speak of him as the most learned. On the other, as this explanation cannot sufficiently

distinguish him from Bhāratī, they add that he is devoted to knowledge of tunes, an attribute which appears to stress his achievement in Yoga. In the alternative explanation not only is he called a lord of poets but he is also spoken of as the master of intonation. As if realizing the worldly nature of these characteristics, the same explanation adds that he is fully cognizant of the real essence of the mundane world. Sāgara is one who not only knows the full depths of the ocean of truth but also has dived to its bottom and collected the jewels of knowledge. Somehow, not transgressing the bounds of ascetic life, has been attributed to him as a special characteristic. Tīrtha is one who bathes at the confluence of three rivers in the form of the knowledge and the realization of the truth, 'That is Thou'. Divested of metaphorical trappings this means that Tīrtha is a Samnyāsi who always lives in the realization of unity and identity of his individual self with the supreme soul. Appropriately speaking he is thus on a par with the Puri Samnyāsi. Vana, as an ascetic of the tenth order is called, is one who has transcended the snares of desires and carries on his existence in a beautiful forest.

A clever Samnyāsi suggested an ingenious interpretation representing that it too was traditional. According to him, these names are given after the various spots and places to which the great Śankarācārya sent his first disciples to preach the knowledge of true religion and philosophy to the people. It is needless to point out that this explanation has to be strained too much to account for such appellations as Bhāratī and Sarasvatī, though it may be accepted that Sāgara is a contraction of Atisāgara and designated those who went beyond the seas to carry the valuable knowledge.

Śankarācārya's first disciples, whom he admitted to Samnyāsa, were Padmapāda, Hastāmalaka, Sureśvara and Toṭaka. Of these, the first had two pupils, Tīrtha and Āśrama; the second, Vana and Araṇya; the third had three, Sarasvatī, Puri and Bhāratī; and

the fourth also three, Giri, Parvata, and Sāgara. The ten orders of Dasanāmis are, according to this account, to be traced for their appellations to the names of the disciples of Śankarācārya's own disciples.[3] It is not possible at this stage to ascertain what truth, if any, is contained in this account. Most of the names are so curious as names that they are patently later inventions. On the other hand, the order of the names, which is otherwise not logical, is appropriately explained by this account.

At the monastic centres, besides the Samnyāsis proper there are other, generally younger, ascetics, whose task it is to render personal service to the senior and aged Samnyāsis as well as to the centre as a whole. They are called Brahmacāris. And each centre has its own specific name for its Brahmacāris. They are Ānanda, Swarūpa, Caitanya and Prakāśa respectively.

Curiously each monastic centre has a Gotra. Gotra for an individual Brahmanic householder represents his traditional lineage from the Rigvedic poet-sages. What it exactly means for a monastic centre, it has been impossible to know. Repeated enquiries have ended in the same repetition of the Gotra name without any enlightenment. Further, it is intriguing to know that out of the four Gotras two, Avigata and Bhūr-bhuvah, do not occur in the most comprehensive lists of Brahmanic gotras. The gotra of Joshi centre is Bhṛgu, of Śāradā centre Avigata, that of Śṛṅgeri Bhūrbhuvah, and of Govardhana Kāśyapa.

The above mentioned ten orders of Samnyāsis have a specific alignment with monastic centres. The centre near Badri known as Jyotih or Joshi has assigned to it the three orders of Giri, Parvata and Sāgara. The Śāradā centre at Dwaraka concerns itself with the orders Āśrama and Tīrtha. Bhārati, Puri and Sarasvatī are attached to the Śṛṅgeri centre at Śṛṅgeri. To Govardhana centre at Puri are assigned the remaining two classes of Araṇya and Vana.

The Dasanāmis are further classified into four groups without reference to their order. It is very tempting to see in this four-fold grouping the influence of the fact that there were only four monastic centres established by Śankarācārya. The temptation is strengthened by the fact that the four groups are separately assigned to these monastic centres. And they are honoured by the appellation Samparadāya, sect. Though the exact rationale of this grouping is not provided by the significance attached to each, yet it is clear that it is based on the emphasis of different ascetic qualities. The Ānandawāra group attached to Joshi centre is so named because the Samnyāsis of that group are satisfied with whatever food they get without begging for alms or because their joy is not derived from worldly pleasures. The Kīṭawāra group has Śāradā centre as its special abode. Its members are supposed to eat very little. As much quantity of food as is eaten by a vermin is supposed to be sufficient for them. The name signifies, according to another explanation, the high development of the quality of compassion in the members of this group. They do not give trouble even to vermin. The Bhūriwāras of Śṛṅgeri centre are so called either because they renounce gold and such other wealth or because they live only on vegetation growing in jungles. The Bhogawāras of Govardhana centre at Puri are those who keep perfectly indifferent to all worldly pleasures and things. It is seen that the postulated connection between certain ascetic qualities and the names of the four groups is more than problematic. We have already observed that similar connection postulated between the names of the Dasanāmi orders and the stage of ascetic development is neither logical nor appropriately established. But some rationale may be claimed for it. In the case of the four-fold grouping, however, neither the names themselves nor the names of the particular orders of the Dasanāmis, who are separately assigned to one of these groupings, can be said to have any rationale. From impressions gathered during the investigation, we are inclined to conclude that they are esoteric terms

designed for mutual indentification and for detection of impostors. Such a step was necessitated by the frequent fights that used to take place between the Samnyāsis and the Vaishnava Bairāgis.

Each one of the four monastic centres has its own special tutelary male and female deities. Joshi centre of Badari has Nārāyaṇa and Pūrṇāgiri as its tutelary deities. It is interesting to note that the Dasanāmis generally greet each other with the expression, 'Namo Nārāyaṇāya', 'bow to Nārāyaṇa'. Only the Daṇḍis the Brahmin Dasanāmis of the orders Āśrama, Bhāratī, Sarasvatī and Tīrtha, use a different greeting formula, namely 'Namah Śivāya', 'bow to Śiva'. The female deity of this centre is known as Pūrṇāgiri, a rather unfamiliar goddess. Siddheśvara and Bhadrakāli preside over the Śāradā centre at Dwaraka. Both these are well-known forms of Śiva and Pārvati respectively. Kāmākṣi is the tutelary female deity of Śṛṅgeri centre. Oral accounts identify her with Śāradā. We may observe that Mādhava in his *Śankara-digvijaya*[4] has given a glowing account of the temple constructed by Śankarācārya for housing Śāradā incarnate. The male deity of the centre which, be it remembered, is considered to be a stronghold of Śaivism, is Ādivarāha, the third incarnation of Vishnu. During the sixth and seventh centuries of the Christian era, when sculptures of Hindu deities appeared to be in vogue, at two places this extraordinary conception was given an excellent shape and form. One was at Pawaya, Padmāvati, in Malwa and the other in the Ādivarāha cave at Mahābalipura near Madras. Jagannātha, a form of Vishnu, for which Puri has been famous for all these ages, is naturally the tutelary deity of its monastic centre. The female deity presiding there, is Vimalā. She is neither well-known nor does she appear to have memorable local associations. We may note here that though the Dasanāmi Samnyāsis, who are followers of the monistic Vedānta of Śankarācārya, accept for worship various aspects of the Deity in more or less human forms, in theory

they are expected to meditate on the formless Supreme Soul. It is characteristic of Hindu religious synthesis, that even Śankarācārya, the great logician and metaphysician that he was, saw good reason to permit and even to prescribe anthropomorphic worship as a step towards final spiritual realization.

Each one of the centres has its own sacred place and sacred waters. Badarikāśrama and the river Alakanandā serve the Northern centre. Dwaraka is naturally the sacred place of the Śāradā centre of the West. For the sacred waters somehow this centre has been assigned the far off Gomati river, unless there be a little-known stream of that name in the Dwaraka region. Enquiries have failed to substantiate its existence. Śṛṅgeri was chosen by Śankarācārya because of its beautiful situation on the Tuṅgabhadrā river. The Tuṅgabhadrā naturally figures as its sacred waters. The sacred place assigned to this centre lies further south. Rāmeśvara, the southernmost extremity of India and famed in traditional history for Rāma's sojourn, is the choice. The town of Puri, commonly known as Jagannāthapuri, is the sacred place for the fourth centre with the appellation of Purushottama, an epithet which is commonly applied to Vishnu. Its sacred waters are the ocean.

The original Mahanta, the president or the dean – in religious terminology the abbot – of Joshi centre was Toṭaka, Sureśvara, Hastāmalaka and Padmapāda being those of Śāradā, Śṛṅgeri and Govardhana centres respectively.

The four Vedas are distributed among the four centres. The Atharvaveda, which is generally relegated to an inferior position and excluded from the sacrosanct triad of the other three Vedas, becomes the particular concern of the Joshi centre. Śāradā centre has to take care of the Sāmaveda. To Śṛṅgeri is assigned the Yajurveda. The Ṛgveda, which is not only the oldest but is also the fundamental basis for the Yajurveda and the Sāmaveda, is

assigned to the Govardhana centre. We have not been able to get any enlightenment on the rationale of this assignment.

That Śankarācārya in establishing his four centres had in mind not only the organization of the Samnyāsis, but also the spiritual welfare of the Indian population is clear from the fact that he assigned definite territories to each one of these centres. The centres were thus conceived as the integrating units of their respective regions. The Jyotirmaṭha of Badari had the north and the north-west under its charge. The specific areas mentioned are the Kuru-panchala country, Kashmir and the Kamboja country. The first area represents the ancient and the most sacred region west of the line joining Kanauj and Mathura and may be said to centre on modern Delhi. The other area extended beyond the Satlaj as far west and north as was feasible under changing political circumstances. The Śāradā Maṭha of Dwarka was principally the guardian of the west. Sindhu-Sauvira comprised Sindh and some portion of south-west Punjab. Saurashtra, which is old Kathiawad, and Maharashtra were the other two areas under the charge of Śāradā Maṭha. The whole of the Dravidian south, east and west, was to be catered for by the Śṛṅgeri Maṭha. Eastern and north-eastern India became the natural concern of Govardhan Maṭha. Utkala, Kalinga, Magadha, Anga and Vanga, the specifically mentioned areas, are well-known, and comprised eastern and north-eastern India, leaving out Assam. In the traditional list one area called Barbara is mentioned. It is not possible to equate it with Assam, as the latter was known in early times as either Kāmarūpa or Prāgjyotiṣa. Eastern U. P. and Malwa Bundelkhand areas are nowhere expressly included.

A monastic centre, after all, stood for its philosophy and its inculcation among its inmates. And the centres being founded by Śankarācārya could have only one philosophy, that of Advaita Vedanta or pure monism. The four centres were assigned special aphorisms as their symbols of philosophical quintesence. The

inmates were to realize Brahma through and as that formula. The inmates of Jyotirmaṭha realize Brahma with the formula, 'Ayam Ātmā Brahma', 'this Self is Brahma'. The Samnyāsis of Śāradā Maṭha use the famous sentence, 'Tat Tvam Asi', 'That is Thou', in which the term Brahma does not occur, as their motto. The Śṛṅgeri Maṭha relies on a little more egoistic expression of the same truth for its guiding symbol. It runs 'Aham Brahma Asmi', 'I am Brahma'. The motto of the Govardhana Maṭha, which is 'Prajñānam Brahma', 'True Knowledge is Brahma' is the most impersonal and abstract. These formulæ technically known as Mahāvākyas, aphorisms, occur, all the four of them together in one sentence in the *Hayagrīvopaniṣad*. But there is a slight variation. Instead of 'Ayam Ātmā Brahma' we have in the Upaniṣad the sentence 'Ayam Ātmā Antaryāmi Amṛtah', 'this Self is the Deathless Controller'.

A Samnyāsi of whatever order was easily distinguished from Vaishnava ascetics by the colour of his garment which used to be that of ochre. It was in reference to this colour of their garment that all kinds of Śaiva ascetics or Samnyāsis were designated 'Lāl Pādris', red monks. The Vaishnava Bairāgis used to wear white garments and were generically designated as 'Sita Pādris', white monks, the Sanskrit word 'sita' meaning white. Among all principal types of ascetics there is a section which goes naked or used to go naked. Naturally they were not so easily distinguishable, one from the other, the Samnyāsi from the Bairāgi. Their distinctness could be made out only by the 'tilak'-mark on their forehead. The majority of Samnyāsis except the Jogis wear a cut and stitched garment. Only a minority sticks to unstitched piece and objects doctrinally to the use of stitched garment. Those of the Samnyāsis who can manage to obtain it carry a tiger's or panther's skin on their shoulders which provides them with a convenient seat whenever necessary.

All Samnyāsis wear their forehead 'tilak'-mark of the horizontal variety. Almost all of them use ashes for making it. Only

rarely do they use other material for their sect-mark. It consists of three horizontal lines representing the 'tridanta' implement of of Śiva or his third eye. Some make only two horizontal lines and place a dot either above the lines or below them. This is considered to represent the phallic emblem of Śiva [5]. The ashes with which the sect-mark is made are known as 'vibhūti', power.

Wearing of the mark is an important ritual and is handed down from hoary antiquity. The three-horizontal-lined mark made with ashes is called 'tripuṇḍra'; and its ritual and procedure are laid down in *Bṛhat-Jābālopaniṣad*. It is suggested that the procedure was expounded to Bhusuṇḍa, who is listed as an additional Paramahamsa, by Śiva himself in his aspect of Kālāgni-Rudra. Ideally, the mark is to be made on thirty-two different parts of the body. In practice the minimum number of places prescribed and adopted are five. The same Upaniṣad lays down whence the ashes, the material with which the sect-mark is made, may be taken. Those who are beyond 'varṇa', and 'āśrama', that is to say Samnyāsis are exhorted to take it from the fires in the cremation ground. The alternative allowed is to take the ashes from a temple of Śiva. It is further stated that it is the wearing of this 'tripuṇḍra'-mark with the prescribed ashes that exonerates and indemnifies a Samnyāsi in respect of the absence of observances of 'varṇa' and 'āśrama' prescribed in the sacred texts. It is very interesting and instructive to note that in this Upaniṣad the Tripuṇḍra-mark is not identified with any of Śiva's marks or belongings, much less with his phallic emblem. It is declared to constitute the three principal deities of the Hindu pantheon, Brahmā, Vishnu and Śiva [6].

Every novitiate at his initiation as a Samnyāsi has the tuft of hair on his scalp removed and his head clean-shaven. Afterwards a majority of them grow their hair long and either allow them to lie over their shoulders in matted locks or keep them moulded into a top-crown. About the hair on the face it may be said that

growing a beard is the practice of the majority. But there is a prescribed harmony. And that is that those who grow the hair on the head ought to allow the hair on the face to grow as well. Those of the moderns who do not conform to this prescription have evidently set at naught the traditional standard. The Paramahamsa Samnyāsis for some time past have been known to be clean-shaven. This practice has latterly spread among other classes of Samnyāsis not so highly placed.

The English writers on the subject[7] mention that the Dasanāmis wear a necklace-rosary of Rudrāksha (*Elaeocarpus ganitrus*) seeds consisting of 32 or 64 beads. Sivānanda Paramahamsa of Hrishikesha informs us that the necklace contains 108 beads. He further says that though Rudrāksha beads are generally used, there is no objection to the use of either 'Tulasi' beads or even those of crystal.

The Rudrāksha seed is not smooth on the outside but is indented and has protuberances. These protuberances are technically called 'mouths'. Jadunath Sarkar[8] informs his readers that seeds with only one mouth are immensely preferred to others. Seeds with eleven mouths take second precedence. Curiously enough there is a whole Upaniṣad devoted to this subject called the *Rudrāksha-Jābālopaniṣad;* and the importance and the significance of the bead are there expounded by Kālāgni-Rudra again. The questioner is Bhusuṇḍa; but on one occasion, Sanatkumāra, too, the most ancient of the eternal Brahmacāris, joins the rank of the curious. Kālāgni-Rudra explains to Bhusuṇḍa that when he had closed his eyes to effect the destruction of Tripura, tears trickled from them on to the ground. They were turned into Rudrakshas. To Sanatkumāra and some of the traditional Paramahamsas, the same aspect of the deity replies that the Rudrakshas are born from the eyes of Rudra, especially when he carries on the work of destruction and shuts his destructive eye. In the same Upaniṣad, a Rudraksha with fourteen mouths

is praised as being the one that originated from the eyes of Rudra. It is described as the remover of all disease and the procurer of all health. The one-mouthed Rudraksha is declared to be the supreme soul incarnate. Wearing it, an anchorite reposes in the Absolute. It may be that the Samnyāsis covet one-mouthed Rudraksha because, though they are Śaiva ascetics, they are expected to transcend their Śaiva connections and strive for their objective of realizing the Absolute. Among Rudraksha beads those that are found naturally pierced for the introduction of thread are to be preferred to those that are to be artificially pierced. The wearing of one thousand of such beads is described as the best practice. They should be worn on a number of parts of the body. Just below the chest and above the stomach a string or two may go round the body. At the wrists, at the mid-arm, in the lobes of the ears and over the matted crown they are exhorted to be worn. Round the neck either thirty-six or sixteen should be worn; but further exhortation recommends two strings, three strings, five strings or even seven strings of them. A string of one hundred and eight Rudrakshas is recommended to be used as the sacred thread. It is interesting to note that among present-day Samnyāsis, Alakhvālas, that is those who cry out Alakh at the time of begging alms, seem to conform to these instructions.

Samnyāsis carry a 'kamaṇḍalu,' bowl, in their hand which is expected to be in shape nearly elliptic and broad rather than vertical and long.

Generally, people are initiated in these orders after they have come of age or at an age very near to that of majority. They generally belong to one of the three caste-groups, Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaiśya. Members of the Śūdra group, in so far as they are properly ordained, are commonly relegated to the section called Nāgā, 'naked and fighting'. Females, who are believed never to have been admitted to any of his orders by

Saṅkarācārya, have been evidently ordained Samnyāsinīs since then. Oman, in one of the pictures in his book, has figured a female ascetic along with three male ascetics (Fig. 13). She appears in the photo with a heavy Rudraksha sacred thread and necklace and is clad only in a strip of cloth covering the privities. Oman has given his personal reactions about two 'Sādhvī's, female ascetics, whom he visited. One of them was Paṇḍitā Māi Jīvanmuktā, a native of Jammu. She was evidently initiated into Samnyāsa by a middle-aged male Sadhu. She was well-read in religious literature written in Sanskrit and could hold an audience for more than an hour in rapt attention with her religious or social discourse. The other was the 'Sādhvī' known as Śrīmāijī, which is honorific vernacular for Sanskrit Mātā, meaning mother. Her original name was Harikuwarbāi.[9] Sister Niveditā, as miss Margaret Noble was known after her initiation by Swāmi Vivekānanda, may be instanced as one junior to the last. A few Samnyāsinīs at Hardwar live in Māiwāḍā there, a centre which is exclusively used by female ascetics. At Vrindāvan, which is principally a Vaishnava centre, one Samnyāsinī is known to be living privately. All these Samnyāsinīs were decently clad in ochre-coloured garments.

Initiation of novitiates is generally conducted in waist-deep water according to the procedure laid down in the *Nāradaparivrājakopaniṣad*. One is first of all administered what is technically known as penance which is believed to wipe off his worldly impurities. He is shaved, an operation similarly symbolic of the turn in life-leaving the worldly past and ushering in the spiritual future. The offering of 'Śrāddha', which is a funeral rite, is even a more significant symbolism. It signifies virtual death of the worldly individual and symbolizes rebirth for spiritual life. The candidate has to fast and to chant the 'Sāvitrī mantra', which is a prayer to the sun for the grant of intellectual clarity. The ritual starts with the usual worship of god Ganeśa. A sacrificial fire is kindled and oblations are offered to it. It is called the

Virajā sacrifice, as oblations are offered in the name of Virajā, and is performed after midnight. The novitiate is told that he has five teachers from whom he has to take lessons and whom he has to revere. They are (1) the ochre-coloured garment, (2) the removal of the top-lock, (3) 'Vibhūti', the ashes, (4) the Rudraksha necklace and (5) the 'mantra' or the formula preached by the preceptor. The formula is one of those four aphorisms which we have already referred to. The particular formula depends upon the monastic centre to which the ordainer belongs. The novitiate is now given his ascetic name. It is significant to note that though the ascetic is given his staff, 'daṇḍa', it does not figure in the list of his teachers. The curious practice of the preceptor bowing down to the disciple before dubbing him with his new name is rather intriguing. We are sorry to say that we have no explanation to offer. It should be noted that at the time of the initiation, at one stage, the novitiate has to walk seven steps stark naked.

The ascetic disciple now is in the first stage and is known as Vastradhāri, one who has put on the garments (of asceticism). It is symptomatic not so much of confusion of thought as of deterioration of standards that the disciple should at this level be alternatively called Avadhūta. It will be remembered that the proper significance of 'avadhūta' stamps it as a very high stage of ascetic development. In the second stage the ascetic is called Taṅgatoḍā. The term carries a significance which has something to do with castration. Repeated enquiries for elucidation met with only shy reactions. The declaration of the third stage which is designated Digambara, sky-clad, entirely depends upon the sweet will of the preceptor. If the disciple is dubbed Digambara, it means that he is assigned to the Nāgā section.

A Dasanāmi may live at one place or may go on wandering. His choice is not conditioned by weather. He is not required like the Bauddha 'Bhikshu' of old or the Jain Sadhu of to-day to remain

at one place during the four months of the rainy season. If he chooses to stay at one place, then a Dasanāmi lives in a monastery generally belonging to the Dasanāmi school. If he goes on his wanderings, he is generally expected not to stop at one place for more than three days. On such wanderings, a Samnyāsi may resort to any Śaiva monastery, if one exists, at his visiting place. Otherwise he has to beg for his food. On occasions of religious significance, when ascetics are expected to visit certain places both to discharge their own religious duty as well as to remind the lay public of an important aspect of their religion, they generally go in company, in tens and twenties. Religious-minded individuals of charitable disposition have founded special rest-houses called Dharmaśālās and Annachatras, where such ascetics get shelter and at meal-times are given appropriate food. At the place of pilgrimage, the local Śaiva monasteries are always ready to cater with much enthusiasm for their religiously bent guests.

It is the cherished desire of most Samnyāsis, if these renouncing persons may be said to cherish any desire, to visit all the well-known places of Hindu pilgrimage from one end of the country to the other at least once and if possible oftener. Of the occasions of religious significance, when visit to a particular place of pilgrimage is almost compulsory for an ascetic, that of the Kumbha–Meḷā, Kumbha assemblage, is the supreme one. Another occasion, rather subsidiary is provided by the lunar and the solar eclipses. Especially the latter occasion, if the solar eclipse should occur on a Monday on which also falls the dark fifteenth of the lunar month, may be described as second only to the Kumbha-Meḷā. At various sacred waters it is the desire of both the lay Hindus and the ascetics to bathe at such times. For such occasion, the lake at Kurukshetra a few miles from Delhi is the most important one The recent occurrence of the solar eclipse on Monday which happened to be the 15th of the dark half of the Hindu month of Māgha led, as reported in newspapers, half a million lay Hindus to it.[10] At their service, not less than five thousand ascetics kept

themselves ready, traversing over long distances. With the help of their varied contortions and bodily postures, indicative of their penances and vows, not only did they instil in the minds of the lay Hindus present there some conviction of worldly pain being conquerable but also earned substantial alms for themselves and their monasteries.

Those who stay at the monastery generally carry on the usual worship of the deity at the temple of the monastery. With the help of their Rudraksha rosary, they mutter their motto or the great sentence or some other sacred formula. Some of them practise a little 'yoga' though much more of it is theoretically expected. One form of 'yoga' known as Haṭhayoga is properly speaking forbidden to Dasanāmis, yet the contortions and postures referred to above, which ascetics resort to at places of pilgrimage, are nothing but an aspect of that 'yoga'. Some of them read some religious literature. Generally one of the senior resident ascetics daily gives a religious discourse or conducts a divine service. Senior ascetics of the Paramahamsa stage are almost always well-versed in philosophical literature and are expected to carry on disputations and to preach and teach.

Dasanāmis observe the fasts of the 11th of the bright half of the lunar months of Āṣāḍha and Kārtika and the Krishna's 8th of the dark half of Śrāvaṇa as well as Śivarātri, the 14th of the dark half of the lunar month of Māgha, as fasts. The first three are Vaishnava fasts and the fourth alone is Śaiva. Ananta-caturdaśī, the 14th of the bright half of Śrāvaṇa, Dasarā, the 10th of the bright half of Āśvin, Dīpāvali, the 15th of the dark half of Kārtika and Dattajayantī, the 15th of the bright half of Phālgun are observed as festivals, as among the lay Hindus.

The four principal monastic centres have not sufficed to contain the growing number of Samnyāsis during these ages. And eminent Samnyāsis have from time to time set up new centres at a number of important places of pilgrimage like Hrishikesh, Hard-

war, Vrindāvan, Prayāg, Banaras, Ujjain, Girnār, and Trimbak near Nasik. Other important places, without being places of pilgrimage, like Delhi, Ahmedabad, Baroda and Bombay too, have such centres. Such a centre is called Sthāna – popularly mispronounced in Northern India as 'asthāna' – meaning spot, place. The founder Samnyāsi or his spiritual descendant either appointed by him or elected by his Samnyāsi disciples, as the case may be, is in charge of such an establishment.

Generally there is some property in the ownership of the establishment. Some of the establishments are so rich that their management and atmosphere is not very dissimilar to that of a state. The head looks upon it as his duty not only to provide the usual amenities for its inmates but is also very enthusiastic and eager to offer the same to visiting Samnyāsis. Most of these establishments or Sthānas engage in teaching activities especially in Sanskrit language and in religio - philosophical literature in that language or in the vernacular. They also feed civilian visitors and beggars if they happen to arrive at meal-time. Hospitality, in fact, is one of their distinguishing marks. We will end this chapter by noting that there is a record of the end of the eleventh century of a Śaiva monastic centre at Belgame in Mysore territory proudly mentioning the performance of these functions. Its teaching activity we may mention with proud happiness was almost of the University standard as it conducted classes in the whole field of knowledge known to Sanskrit language at that time.[11]

Dasanami Nagas or Militant Samnyasis

WE have observed that every Samnyāsi at the time of his initiation has to strip himself naked and walk seven steps in that condition. A whole division of the Jains is known as the Digambara or the sky-clad sect. Theoretically not only the ascetic section of that sect but also the lay-devotees are expected to renounce all garments and go naked.[1] The huge idol of Gomateśvara, the Jain Tīrthamkara, at Shravanabelagola is completely naked with only a sculptured creeper going over certain parts of the body. There are forms of Śiva which are described as having the genitals either erect or drooping, and there are 'Linga' representations, dating from about the second century B. C., in which Śiva's genitals are thus shown. Even earlier than these are the Vedic references to some Indian people as worshippers of the male genitals, 'śiśna'. According to the *Ṛgveda*, there were some groups or individuals among Ṛgvedic Aryans themselves who could be described as having only the air or the wind or rather the ether as the covering for the middle part of their bodies. Most authorities are agreed that the reference is to some kind of naked ascetics. If male genitals were at any time deified as a result of some esoteric doctrines, it is natural in this land (where doctrines have been tried to be translated into practice every now and then) that not only individuals may exist but also groups may arise who may practise nakedness. The theory of renunciation may also dictate such practice in its logical application. The sect of naked ascetics, thus, has not only a hoary but also an orthodox antiquity. In keeping with this

we find that among most ascetics, there exists a sect or a class which is generally regarded as extreme in its practices and insists on going naked throughout life. Early travellers have noted the existence of such naked ascetics wandering about in large groups. It is since the advent of the British as rulers of British India that the naked ascetics were prevented from wandering about in that condition everywhere and all the year round as they chose. But even the Imperial authority of the British had to concede the right of these naked ascetics to walk through the public streets in procession for their sacred bath called the 'Kumbha' bath at the time of the 'Kumbha-Meḷā'.

The Nāgā class of Samnyāsis, though they receive their name after their chief characteristic of nakedness, has for long ages been known for its more or less expert and certainly quick use of the worldly weapons of offence and defence. So much has this aspect been associated with them that they have been rightfully given the alternative appellation of the fighting Samnyāsis.[2]

It is tempting to see in the traditional 'daṇḍa', staff, of the standard Samnyāsis, described by Manu and in the Upaniṣads we have referred to, their first weapon of offence and defence over and above its being their symbol. Whether the origin of the arms-bearing practice of some of the ascetics can or cannot be traced to their original staff or 'daṇḍa', it is clear that some Śaiva sectarians as can be judged to have been ascetics carried regular weapons for fighting with the denizens of some super-natural world who invariably attempted to spoil them of their coveted mystic victories and attainments.

Patanjali in his *Mahābhāṣya* speaks of a Śiva Bhāgavata as carrying an iron lance in his hand.[3] Bāṇa, the famous Sanskrit writer of the seventh century A. D., and Mahendravarman, a Pallava king of Kanchi of the same century, have provided us

with the earliest reference to this aspect of some Śaiva sects and ascetics. In his *Harṣacarita*, Bāṇa states that Puṣpabhūti, the father of the great king Harṣavardhana of Kanauj, approached an ascetic at Thaneshvar, which is not far from Delhi and still continues to be an important place of pilgrimage, for procuring a son as he had till then no male issue to succeed him to his throne. The ascetic had taken his abode in an old temple of Śiva. His name is given by Bāṇa as Bhairavācārya. He was evidently a native of Maharashtra who had migrated to Thaneshvar. Anyway he was a southerner but not a Drāviḍa. For among his three Samnyāsi disciples, one is specifically described as a Drāviḍa, that is Tamilian.[4] Bhairavācārya had his own 'Siddhi, or the final achievement of his ascetic practices to accomplish and he required at that time the services of an intrepid warrior like Puṣpabhūti to gain it. It is clear from the description that all his Samnyāsi disciples were also intrepid fighters. But evidently Bhairavācārya did not consider any one of them to be a match for the principal malefactor of the supernatural world whom he expected to thwart the attainment of his object. In the sequel, as Puṣpabhūti succeeded in overcoming the principal malefactor, Bhairavācārya is represented to have achieved his object and left this world in a mysterious manner to become a denizen of some supernatural world. Two of his Samnyāsi disciples preferred to follow Puṣhpabhūti, the king, and take employment as his personal guards to be in attendance with drawn swords. Here is surely an intimate connection established and known to exist between non-denominational Śaiva ascetics and arms-bearing and arms-practice, first for the attainment of spiritual ends and secondarily for hire to appropriate persons.

In the *Prabhodhacandrodaya* of Krishnamiśrayati, a drama performed before a king of Bundelkhand who flourished in the fourth quarter of the 11th century A. D., a Śaiva ascetic of the Kāpālika sect is represented as having a sword by his side which he readily draws against a Jain ascetic on slight provocation.[5] In

Śaṅkara-Digvijaya, Mādhava Vidyāraṇya in the 14th century A.D. describes Krakaca, the leader of the Kāpālikas as well as his numerous followers, whom Śankarācārya is believed to have vanquished at Ujjain, as carrying an iron lance.

Col. Tod has attested to the existence of Gosāis or Śaiva ascetics who professed arms. He likens them to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. They lived in monasteries scattered over the country of Rajasthan, possessed lands and begged or served for pay on occasions. He characterizes them as good defensive soldiers. They used intoxicating herbs and spirituous liquor in great quantities. A little later in his text, after having referred to Gosāis as the priests of the temple of Ekalinga at Udaipur, he speaks of Kānphāṭā Jogis in Mewad.[7] He speaks of many hundreds of Kānphāṭā Jogis, an order in which not only Brahmins and Rajputs but even Gujars were ordained. The following observation is very important from the point of view of the history of fighting ascetics as it establishes their existence before the 13th century A. D. Tod says: "The poet Chanda [Chand Bardai, the celebrated author of *Prithvirāj Rasāu*] gives an animated description of the bodyguard of the King of Kanauj which was composed of these monastic orders." In a foot-note we are told about the high priest of Jālandarnāth, whose temple is situated near Jalore in Marwad, that he used to appear at the head of a cavalcade far more numerous than any feudal lord of Marwad could boast of. The observation that "these Brahmins were not a jot behind the ecclesiastical lords of the Middle Ages" stresses another similarity between the militant ascetics of India and their mediaeval counterparts in Christian Europe.[8]

J. N. Farquhar[9] mentions a tradition, which he discovered as current among ascetics of northern India, explaining the origin of the fighting classes of Śaiva ascetics. According to it, it was Madhusūdana Sarasvati, the famous ascetic writer on monistic Vedānta, who lived in Banaras in the latter part of the 16th

century A. D., that first organized a corps of ascetic fighters. Though an ascetic, Madhusūdana was intensely interested in the lives of ascetics. He was very unhappy over their frequent massacres by Muslim fakirs, who generally carried some arms and were always militant. It seems he consulted the famous Birbal and, having been advised by him and permitted by the Emperor Akbar, decided to form a section of ascetics, who would carry arms and protect fellow-ascetics. It is curious to note that to get his fighting division manned, Madhusūdana had to go further afield than the first three classes of Hindu society. His purpose could be achieved only by ordaining Śūdras in the ranks of Samnyāsis. And monastic tradition has it that it was since then that those classes of Dasanāmis, to which the Śūdras were admitted, came to be looked upon as impure. Farquhar states that the tradition is persistent and believable.

We have already quoted certain significant observations of Col. Tod. In their light we may conclude that some sections of ascetics were almost professional soldiers long before Madhusūdana Sarasvati's time, may they be Jogis or Dasanāmi ascetics. An interesting incident which occurred at Thaneshvar, the sacred place of the Hindus near Delhi, in the presence of the Emperor Akbar in 1567 appears to us to further militate against the monastic tradition discovered and believed in by Farquhar. Farquhar himself, following Vincent Smith, draws his readers' attention to that incident. As Vincent Smith has observed the occurrence "throws rather unpleasant light upon Akbar's character". While the Emperor was at camp at Thaneshvar there ensued a quarrel over the collection of pilgrim's alms between two classes of Samnyāsis. Abu-l-Fazl has called the two classes Kurs and Puris. It is quite clear that Abu-l-Fazl has incorrectly stated the name of one of the two classes. His Kurs could not have been other than Giris. The quarrel, therefore, was between Giris and Puris,* two

* The animosity subsisting between Giris and Puris has left a late echo in the Diaries of the Peshwa. In A.D. 1742-43 Balaji Bajirao recognizing the disciple of Gyangir Gosavi as his legitimate successor mentions that Gyangir was killed in the fight that took place between the Giris and Puris at the Godavari—assemblage (Vad's Diaries of the Peshwa II, 2, p. 197).

orders within the Dasanāmi School of Śaiva ascetics. The leader of the Puris complained to the Emperor about the unjust usurpation of their habitual spot by the Giris. Both the parties are represented as having begged the Emperor to allow them to decide the dispute by recourse to arms. Are we to suppose that they intended to try the utility of their new acquisition of arms procured for them by Madhusūdana Sarasvati? Is it reasonable to believe that the Śūdra ascetics ordained by Madhusūdana at best a few years earlier were allowed by the orthodox section to collect alms at such a pilgrim-centre as Thaneshvar? It appears to us that the whole incident bears the stamp of a habitual occurrence. And if the Emperor's permission was sought, it was, first of all, because he happened to be at the spot, and secondly, because he must have declined to settle the issue himself.

Akbar granted the permission. In the ensuing fight the Puris got worsted. Akbar was not happy over the development. He gave signal to some of his 'more savage followers' to help the Puris. The result was that the Giris had to fly for life. They were, however, pursued evidently by Emperor's men and, in the words of the chronicler Abu-l-Fazl, a number of 'the wretches were sent to annihilation'. The author of *Tabakāt* agrees with Abu-l-Fazl that the Emperor greatly enjoyed the sight. And there is a magnificent manuscript of another Muslim work illustrating the same incident. Al-Badaoni and the author of *Tabakāt* state that the contending parties were the Samnyāsis and the Jogis, the former numbering three hundred and the latter five hundred. Al-Badaoni vouchsafes the additional information that it was a habit with the Jogis and Samnyāsis to fight there, while the author of *Tabakāt* tells his readers that the Jogis wore only rags. Both assert that a number of the imperial soldiers smeared themselves with ashes and fought on the side of the Samnyāsis as ordered by the Emperor and that they came off victorious.[10] We may, therefore, conclude that arms-bearing, and fighting if need be, was an old aspect of ascetic organization. What Madhusūdana Sarasvati

actually contributed to it, it is impossible to decide with the help of available information. It is possible that he only exhorted the fighting ascetics to boldness and courage in using their arms against the Islamic foes. We know for certain that within a century of Madhusūdana Sarasvati's time the Maharashtrian ascetic Rāmdāsa was exciting the people of his region to valorous deeds against Muslim onslaught. Jadunath Sarkar[11] has noted a very important traditional piece of history which fully corroborates our argument. According to it, Nāgā Samnyāsis, by name Bhavānanda, Surasurānanda and Kamalānanda, are reported to have won a decisive victory at Hardwar over Bairāgis, the Vaishnava ascetics in the year 1266 A.D. The conclusion that fighting Samnyāsis must have existed before Akbar's time is further borne out by the traditional information about the specific organization of Nāgā Samnyāsis, called the Ākhāḍā, given by the contemporary official leader Mahant Lakshmaṇagiri of the Mahānirvāṇi Ākhāḍā at Prayag.[12]

An 'ākhāḍā', which word is sometimes translated as monastery, must be distinguished from the latter in so far as the former is a centre where only the Nāgā Samnyāsis are inmates. Further only those Nāgā Samnyāsis who are attached to particular 'ākhāḍā's can be the inmates of their respective 'ākhāḍā's. A Nāgā's specific status depends on his 'ākhāḍā' and has no reference whatever to the particular order of the Dasanāmis he belongs to. It is better to render 'ākhāḍā' by the military term regiment. There are six well-known and principal 'ākhāḍā's. One of them is now known as the Junā, or the old 'ākhāḍā', though formally it is designated Bhairava Ākhāḍā. It is significant that the tutelary deity of that 'ākhāḍā' is now Dattātreya. We are informed that formerly, as the formal name of the 'ākhāḍā' implies, its tutelary deity was Bhairava, an aspect of Śiva. If Bhairava was the tutelary deity, we submit that even though in the traditional account its organization is placed very much later, i.e. A.D. 1146 the 'ākhāḍā' represents an old sect of Śaivite ascetics. They are

the Kāpālikas whose representative we meet with in the drama *Prabodhacandrodaya*. Whether the tutelary deity is Bhairava or Dattātreya, the affinity of this 'ākhāḍā', that is, of the Samnyāsi inmates making up this 'ākhāḍā', with the Yogis is clear. In 1950, three hundred ascetics were reported to be belonging to this 'ākhāḍā'. Its speciality is that under it are also organized female ascetics, evidently Nāgās, naked. They are appropriately designated Avadhūtanīs. Though originally the 'ākhāḍā' was said to have been founded at Prayag, its principal centre now is at Banaras. It has its branches at Prayag, Hardwar, Ujjain and Trimbak among other places. No branch is known to exist south of the Godavari. Attached to Junā Ākhāḍā is Āvāhana Ākhāḍā, popularly known as Ābhāna. According to one account, it is the oldest 'ākhaḍā' to be founded, A.D. 547 being the traditional year of its establishment. According to the information we received its foundation is dated A. D. 1547. And Jadunath Sarkar the historian accepts this date.[13]

The third Ākhāḍā is known as the Niranjani Ākhāḍā. It is believed to have been founded in A.D. 904 at Mandavi in Kachha. Its tutelary deity is Kārtikaswāmi, the general of the gods in Hindu mythology. Kārtikaswāmi is Skanda, the son of Śiva and Pārvati. As successful general of the gods, he appropriately becomes the tutelary deity of a fighting organization. It is interesting to observe that Skanda as a Hindu deity had a short career, and his worship was mostly confined to western India. He figures on the coins of some of the Indo-Parthian and Indo-Scythian kings who held dominion over western and north-western India for about a century before the Christian era and two centuries and more after it. Kachha and Saurashtra were not only included in their dominions, but would appear to have been their strongholds during this long period.[14] There was a historically attested temple of this god* at Bilsad[15], to which in the year A.D. 414 a gallery is

* To-day this deity receives worship only in the Tamil – Malayalam region under the name of Subrahmanya.

recorded to have been added. The principal centre of the Ākhāḍā at present is at Prayag. It has its branches at Trimbak near Nasik, Onkar-Mandhata on the Narmada, Ujjain, Banaras, Hardwar and Udaipur. Its regular membership in 1950 is stated to have been five hundred males. The fourth 'ākhāḍā' by name Ānanda is attached to it. Its tutelary deity is fire. It is believed to have been founded in the Berars in the year A. D. 856. Its membership was rather thin and our principal authority on the subject has not recorded its actual strength.

Mahānirvāṇi Ākhāḍā, the fifth unit in the organization, was founded in the Siddheśwar temple at Kundagad, in that part of Chhota Nagpur which is known as Zarkhand. Its inmates are believed to have fought a battle called the battle of Jñānavāpi at Banaras at an unknown date. The historically attested conflict between Dasanāmi Samnyāsis and Aurangzeb's forces in the year A.D. 1664 is also credited to this 'ākhāḍā'. Its members are believed to have saved Banaras in that year from spoliation by Aurangzeb's forces. In spite of all this evidence, granting it to be true, it is hard to believe that the 'ākhāḍā' was started in A. D. 749, as there is no other corroborative evidence. And, whatever the actual services of Śankarācārya to Dasanāmi organization might have been, in view of the consensus of opinion about his role in putting that organization on a sound basis, we cannot believe that the fighting section of the Dasanāmis was organized before his time. Its principal centre is at Prayag, with branches at other places. It counts five hundred regular members. Owing to the fact that many of its mahants or leaders were famous ascetics, it takes first rank amongst the 'ākhāḍā's at present. Its tutelary deity is the great sage Kapila. Though Kapila was not known to be a fighter, his highly developed Brahmanic power, mythology narrates, enabled him to burn down a large army by his glance.

To have a banner or a characteristic weapon symbolic of the unity of the regiment is a regular feature of the fighting organi-

zation of the Vaishnava ascetics, the Bairāgis. It has not been encountered as a more or less regular feature of the Dasanāmi organization. It is interesting, therefore, to note that the Mahānirvāṇi Ākhāḍā and the one attached to it, Atal, are the only ones, which, in an account we have been able to get in our investigations, are credited with these insignia. As the account is based on the actual formation of the procession of Nāgā Samnyāsis at Kumbha-Meḷā at Ujjain in the year A. D. 1933 its evidence must be considered to be authoritative. The banner-standard and the weapon-spear of the Mahānirvāṇi Ākhādā is known as Sūrya-prakāś and Bhairavaprākāś.

The sixth 'ākhāḍā', Atal, has Gaṇapati for its tutelary deity and its weapon-spear is called Sūryaprakāś and Caṇḍiprakāś. It is believed to have been established in the year A.D. 647 and has only about one hundred regular inmates. Its principal centre is at Banaras with branches at other places. It was first founded in the Gondavana.

Every 'ākhāḍā' is further divided into eight sub-units called 'dāvā's. A dāvā according to the best information we could sift appears to be a quarter. And as there are eight quarters in the universe the number of 'dāvā's is said to be eight. In the formation of these 'dāvā's, we gather, the particular order of the Dasanāmis into which a Samnyāsi is originally ordained, plays an important part. What it is exactly we have been unable to ascertain. There is a further sub-unit of these Samnyāsis which is called 'maḍhi'. Etymologically 'maḍhi' is only a vernacular diminutive of the Sanskrit word 'maṭha', monastery. They number fifty two and are divided among only four orders of the Dasanāmis : Giri, Puri, Bhāratī and Bana. Such is the account given by Jadunath Sarkar. Our investigation revealed that Bhāratī includes also Sarasvatī, Bana also Araṇya, and Giri both Parvata and Sāgara, so that in practice eight of the ten Dasanāmi orders are connected with the 'maḍhi' organization.

There are two other 'ākhādā's which in our investigations we came across as attached to Junā or Bhairava described above. They are Agan and Alakhiya. Agan, which is only a corrupt form of the Sanskrit word Agni, fire, is not a unit connected with Samnyāsis proper whether Dasanāmis or Nāgās. We have described above a monastic centre of Brahmacāris of this 'ākhāḍā'. The Alakhiya Ākhāḍā is a problem. We are inclined to believe that there is a confusion caused by the fact that there are, among Śaiva ascetics sections whose members cry 'Alakh'* when they beg for alms. Such ascetics are seen generally carrying fairly long iron pincers, in their hands. They commonly belong to the order of Śaiva ascetics who are properly described as Jogis. It is possible that organized or semi-organized group-marching in the formal procession of the Kumbha-Meḷā might have led to an inaccurate naming of an 'ākhāḍā' after them; or in the alternative, for their own prestige the members themselves have begun this nomenclature to give themselves some status.

There are two other 'ākhāḍā's, Sūkhaḍa and Gūdaḍa, which according to our information are also attached to the Junā Ākhādā. They are two of the six groups having names ending in 'kaḍ', 'khaḍ' and 'daḍ', about which there is a good deal of confusion. Wilson[16] has described four of these groups, one separately and the other three together. He was sure that the one group treated separately was a separate class of ascetics, and the other three were more or less of the same class with minor variations of practice and observance. The three treated together by him are Sukhada, Rukhada and Ukhada. It should be noted that in the information made available to us, only one of these three groups namely Sūkhaḍa is represented as an 'ākhāḍā'. In view of Wilson's treatment of this and the two other groups as more or less identical, it is possible that our authority meant Sūkhaḍa to represent all the three groups. We may further point out that G. A.

* Alakh is vernacular for the Sanskrit word 'Alaksya', meaning 'not perceptible' hence formless, i.e., the Absolute Brahma.

Grierson in his article on Rukhad in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*[17] groups, along with it in the heading, Sukhaḍs and Ukhaḍs. He opines that they are "all Śaiva mendicants, yogis, said to have been branches of Aughar or Oghar sect of yogis founded by Brahmagiri, a Gujarathi disciple of Gorakhnath." According to him all of them cry Alakh. Wilson, however, ascribes the cry of Alakh only to Gudaḍs, Sukhaḍs and Rukhaḍs. Gudaḍs, he states, wear ear-rings like the Kānphāṭā Jogis or a cylinder of wood passed through the lobe of the ear. The Sukhaḍs and Rukhaḍs wear Rudrāksha and metallic ear-rings respectively. About the practice of the other two, that is Bhukaḍa and Kukaḍa, we have no information. According to both Wilson and Grierson Ukhaḍs are not a separate group in the sense in which Sukhaḍs or Gudaḍs are but represent members of all the other five groups who indulge in meat and spirituous liquors.

Apropos of the speciality of Ukhaḍs mentioned above, namely indulgence in meat and drink, we should like to mention that, according to Jadunath Sarkar, of the six regular 'ākhāḍā's only the Mahānirvāṇi and the Niranjani definitely forbid the use of intoxicants by their members. Some superior and senior members of Junā Ākhāḍā at Hardwar gave the information that in their 'ākhāḍā', too, meat and drink are forbidden. If by implication members of the other four 'ākhāḍā's of the regular Nāgā ascetics are entitled to the use of intoxicants, indulgence in meat and liquor by some members of more or less irregular groups cannot be considered such a great peculiarity as to entitle them to separate nomenclature.

One thing is quite clear to our mind from our investigation and our study of the authorities on the subject that these five or six groups are represented in our picture of the military organization of the Nāgā ascetics by the three subsidiary 'ākhāḍā's Sukhaḍa, Gudaḍa and Alakhiya attached to the Junā Ākhāḍā. In all probability groups having fair number of members are singled

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out for recognition by distinct names as Sukhaḍa and Gudaḍa. It means that some of their members have been important enough to secure this coveted recognition. Ascetics desire this recognition to procure an assured place in the formal processions connected with the Kumbha-Meḷā. And it is gratifying to note that there are a few intelligent and well-behaved members of these groups who have wealth and prestige behind them. Those who have not yet succeeded in securing this undisputed recognition have tried to attain the purpose by classifying themselves as Alakhiya, catching hold of the common characteristic of their begging cry 'Alakh.' It is clear from their observances and practices that all these groups were originally, as Grierson points out, Yogis or Nāthapanthi ascetics. This conclusion is corroborated by the fact that among them there are Siddhas, that is those that have attained super-natural powers, who are always designated Nāths. Equally clearly they are to-day more or less officially recognized as members of the Nāgā section of the Dasanāmi ascetics.

The Nāgā aseetics have throughout tended to practise what may be called physical penance. Difficult physical postures, exposing oneself to five kinds of fire, and such other mortificatory rites, which establish the insensibility of the performer to bodily pain, are almost the counterpart of the military drill that a regular regiment receives as a part of its training to keep it trim. In addition they have a propaganda value. In certain sects from very ancient times, such practices having been regarded as an attribute of the Divine, are held to be conducive to salvation. As the Nāgā section originally was recruited from the Śūdras the path of salvation to be prescribed for them had to be one in which physical effort was to preponderate over mental. This lack or total absence of mental effort among the Nāgā ascetics had its evil effects, which became apparent to them when they had to counter the attacks not of the material weapons of the Muslims but of the verbal and mental onslaughts of the Christian missionaries.

To lead disputations with Christian missionaries was almost an insuperable task for the Nāgā leaders, who either had distinguished themselves in the wielding of arms or had traditions amongst them only of distinguished warriors. Added to the intricacy of the philosophical topics in dispute there was the difficulty of language. Nāgās solved their problem by requesting some of the learned Paramahamsas among their Dasanāmi brethren to assume their leadership. In spite of the differences of caste and prevailing prejudices there were forth-coming sufficient number of Paramahamsas to accede to the request, demonstrating thereby the truth about their ascetic status. Paramahamsa is one who has no prejudices. These leaders of the Nāgās came to be designated Maṇḍaleśvaras. The term is rather intriguing. Etymologically it means the lord of 'maṇḍala', region. Evidently it is a term of politico-administrative organization. Maṇḍaleśvara in effect means the same thing as a Commissioner, if not a Governor, though in actual practice a Maṇḍaleśvara of the Nāgās was more like a Brahmin adviser of a king than the king himself. A Maṇḍaleśvara before he assumes his office, is already an important personage with a number of Samnyāsi disciples. He is already the head of a 'maṭhā', an 'aśrama' or a 'sthāna'. As such generally he has already a fairly large estate to manage at his disposal. When a Paramahamsa becomes a Maṇḍaleśvara, the Nāgā ascetics that are attached to and ordained into the particular 'ākhāḍā' do homage to him and recognize him as their spiritual preceptor more or less in the same way as they do the particular Nāgā ascetic who ordained them.

The functions of a Maṇḍaleśvara have come to be extended so as to include doctrinal inculcation of the inmates of an 'ākhāḍā'. He is now looked upon as an Ācārya and even called so. It speaks for the vitality of asceticism in general, and Nāgāism in particular, that the Nāgā ascetics should have instituted an arrangement for the spiritual education of their class through Maṇḍaleśvaras attached to separate 'ākhāḍā's. The institution which discharges such function for the Mahānirvāṇi Ākhāḍā at Prayag has almost a full

course of Sanskrit instruction like that of the Government Sanskrit College at Banaras and trains the disciples for various examinations of that College. As a consequence of this development of the last fifty years or so some Nāgā ascetics have now become learned enough to cccupy the position of a Maṇḍaleśvara. The spiritual preceptor, during whose life-time his disciple becomes a Maṇḍaleśvara, gets the title of Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara.

The head of an Ākhāḍā like the head of a Maṭha or monastery is called a Mahanta. Ordinarily his duties and responsibilities are identical with those of his compeer of the 'maṭha' organization. The difference manifests itself at the Kumbha-Meḷā. The 'mahanta' of an 'ākhāḍā, like the 'mahanta' of a monastery, has his own camp. Whereas the encampment of the head of one monastery, having at best an ochre-coloured banner flying in front of it, is indistinguishable from the camp of the head of another monastery, the camp of the head of an 'ākhāḍā' can be distinguished from the camp of the head of a monastery as well as from that of the head of another 'ākhāḍā' from afar. These camps of the heads of 'ākhāḍā's, for one thing, have lances stuck erect in the ground in front. Each one has its own characteristic flag which may be likened to the regimental flag of the army. The heads of monasteries try to provide caparisoned elephants to carry them in the formal processions characteristic of the Kumbha-Meḷā. The heads of 'ākhāḍā's invariably do so. Along with them they carry on the backs of elephants their bannered insignia and their lances typifying their fighting function. Both the bannered insignia and the lances are treated as objects of worship and due homage is paid to them. As if to signify that they are a comprehensive army of the old Hindu organization they have in the procession some camels and horses, which along with the Nāgā ascetics forming the foot-soldiers make up a 'caturaṅga senā', a four-limbed army.

The formal procession of ascetics at a Kumbha-Meḷā had been in the past an occasion not only for bickerings, quarrels, strifes

but also for regular battles. Questions of prestige and precedence between 'ākhāḍā's themselves or their leaders were governed by well-known conventions which were generally respected. It was, for example, a prescribed custom that the Nāgās had the privilege of walking at the head of the procession in a perfectly naked condition. The order of precedence among the various 'ākhāḍā's was well-known and was observed without breach. Among the Śaiva ascetics it was also well-known that it was the Nāgās' privilege to bathe first in the sacred waters. But whether the Śaiva ascetics as a whole had the right to go first or the Vaishnava Bairāgis had it was, more often than not, a bone of contention. For it was a matter of one's dignity, both worldly and spiritual, whether one reached the sacred water just at the appointed time of the sacred bath or whether one reached there some time before it or after it. If one has the bath after the fixed and the auspicious time, one gathers no merit. To reach the sacred water much earlier than the auspicious time meant loss of dignity. Still greater headache was caused over the actual spot of bathing. And here we request our readers to remember the limited number of sanctified bathing 'ghāt's at the sacred places of Kumbha-Meḷā and the huge number of pilgrims and the ascetics that are there, desirous of bathing at the appointed time. In the past there have been reports, as for example the one for the Kumbha-Meḷā at Hardwar in A. D. 1796. We are told in it that there were two million people competing for the sacred bath. We are further informed that at that same assemblage there was a regular battle between the Śaiva and the Sikh ascetics and that five thousand of the former were killed.[18]

A number of the leaders of the Nāgā ascetics complained that it was getting more and more difficult to get recruits to their ranks. The general impression gathered during the investigation was that the number of the Nāgā ascetics is steadily dwindling. Jadunath Sarkar[19] has stated that the single Atal Ākhāḍā counted three lakh persons as its members during the

time of Delhi Emperors. He also states that the principal centre of this 'ākhāḍā' in pre-Moghul times was at Jodhpur and that its members helped the Jodhpur Rajputs to repel some of the attacks made by Muslims from Baluchistan and Kabul. From other accounts it appears that the most famous of the fighting corps of the Nāgā Samnyāsis was attached to Jaipur. The Nāgās seem to have been under an obligation imposed by their religious chief to fight on behalf of the Raja of Jaipur whenever required. It is reported that as many as seven thousand Nāgā ascetics armed with spears, bows and arrows, and shields, used to march in the vanguard of the Jaipur army in battle. The Gosāi proprietor of the Devapur state in Raipur, Madhyapradesa, used to keep a force of Nāgā ascetics. Śaiva Samnyāsis and Vaishnava Bairāgis fought a great battle at Hardwar in 1760 to decide the dispute about precedence at that place. And according to one account recorded by Wilson, the total number of the dead in that action was eighteen thousand. The number of the dead recorded in the account given in the District Gazetteer of Nasik and in that accepted by Russell and Hiralal in their *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces* is one thousand eight hundred only.[20] Making allowance for all exaggeration it would not be unreasonable to conclude that at one time in the recent past the Nāgā Samnyāsis must have numbered between five to ten thousand.

The 1760 battle of Hardwar completely decided the issue in favour of the Śaiva Samnyāsis. Since that year till the time Hardwar territory went under British control, the Vaishnava Bairāgis could not visit that place on special religious occasions. When the British took over Hardwar they made it possible for the Vaishnava Bairāgis to conduct their religious observances at that place by laying down certain rules for the observance of all and keeping regular soldiers to preserve order. About the same time the battle of Hardwar was fought, nearer our home, at Nasik – Trimbak, a similar dispute was, it seems, authoritatively settled by the Peshwa by issuing certain orders. They separated the

two classes of ascetics by assigning distant places for their baths. Similar arrangement was promulgated at Ujjain by the same rulers who held sway there at that time.

Large number of ascetic warriors continued to bear arms and to hire out their fighting services even during the early years of the British dominion in India. Naturally their numbers were much larger in 'Native States' than in the Company's dominions. But the death-knell of fighting asceticism was already rung. The order established by the British rule removed the probability of having to decide questions of religious precedence by resort to arms. Private armies could neither be kept nor assembled. The very ground under the feet of fighting asceticism was thus lost. Further the long arms of the Arms Act caught the lingering shades in its grip. Small wonder that Farquhar[21] could see in a Jaipur deserted temple in 1922 many of the old weapons of war hanging on the walls of a monastery and not bright arms in the hands of Samnyāsis. Dr. Chapekar saw a number of these rusted specimens in many 'ākhāḍā's that he visited in 1951.

The secret of dwindling numbers of Nāgā ascetics lies in the fact that the stimulus provided by the old situation no longer exists. The life of a Nāgā ascetic to-day has neither the glamour nor the charm that it had in the former setting. The life in the 'ākhāḍā's, too, has greatly changed. In the place of the old situation of idling and no work, one of study and regularity is being substituted more and more. Abundance of physical energy is being canalised through wrestling, gymnastics and such other peaceful physical exercises. Free and abundant use of intoxicants has steadily dwindled more or less into restricted use. We believe, that these changes and conditions fully explain the diminution in the number of Nāgā ascetics. There is no need to invoke growing indifference to asceticism and atrophy of ascetic spirit to explain it.

Nathapanthis or Kanphata Jogis

JOGIS are ascetics who have received their particular appellation because they are credited with practices that generically are called Yoga. Yoga is a Sanskrit word which etymologically means application. A Yogi is one who is given to the practice of application. The practice of application consists of a number of postures and exercises and comprehends certain mental control leading on through meditation to absolute concentration. The word Yogi assumes the form Jogi in the vernaculars of the north.

We have included the Yogis as one group among others of the Śaiva ascetics, generically known as Samnyāsis. This is in accordance with the usage of writers on Indian Sādhus. The Jogis are Śaivite in faith and their tutelary deity is some aspect of Śiva, though Hanumān, the monkey-god, and Dattātreya, the ascetic–deity, are not only respected but worshipped side by side. In outward appearance, with their bodies besmeared with ashes and covered with ochre-coloured garments, they are almost indistinguishable from Saiva ascetics and easily marked off from Vaishnava Bairāgis. But they can hardly be said to have the same philosophic outlook as that of the Dasanāmi Samnyāsis. The Dasanāmis, whose philosophy is Advaita or monistic Vedānta, and who revere the great Śankarācārya as the promulgator of their school, do not describe themselves, nor are they referred to by others as Śankarapanthi or Ācāryapanthi, Śankara - sectarians or Ācārya - sectarians. Jogis, on the other hand, describe themselves as Gorakhpanthi, Gorakha - sectarians. To the populace at large, too, irrespective of their sectional differences and notwithstanding

special appellations they are known as Gorakhnāthis. The names of Jogis generally end in Nātha. In their system of observances stress is laid on gaining some kind of mystic power. Their philosophy and practice, thus, are far apart. The Dasanāmi ascetics may, following Farquhar, be described as Vedāntic Samnyāsis; and the Jogis may be given the appellation of Tāntric Samnyāsis.

Jogis with their present outlook and practices are properly described as Tāntric Samnyāsis. As Tāntric literature is fairly recent, it may be supposed by our readers that the Jogi order is of recent origin. This impression must now be countered. We shall start by stating straightway that fundamentally the Jogis represent the oldest school of Indian asceticism. We have drawn attention to the significance of 'tapas' or penance either as mystic power itself or as a system of observances leading to that power. We have also demonstrated the differentiation and distinction between the physical and mental components of this power or the system of achieving it. Śiva was the one god of the Hindu Triad who came to be described as the Yogi and later even as the Mahāyogi. Insensitiveness to worldly goods is one of the attributes early ascribed to Śiva. So, too, has been his association with the cremation - grounds. In *Mahābhārata* is told a story about Mahādev having stopped creation of new beings. He is said to have cut off his organ of generation as no longer necessary and become a Yogi. The particular system of Yoga which Saṅkara followed is, according to *Vāyupurāṇa*, known as Pāśupata Yoga. The Pāśupata sect is already mentioned in *Mahābhārata*. The Pāśupatas are described as propitiating Śiva through 'yoga' and 'ācāra', practice. The description of Pāśupata in *Atharvaśiras Upaniṣad* vow makes it clear that it consisted in self-control, mental and physical. But the doctrines of Pāśupata system as detailed by Mādhava deviate significantly from it.

The yoga referred to above is said to consist of two kinds, one of action and the other of cessation from it. Uttering sylla-

bles and formulae etc. constituted the former and mere feeling, the latter. Ācāra appears as 'caryā' and is helped by such actions as besmearing the body with ashes after worship, removing the sense of indecency attached to begging and eating the remnants of what others have eaten. Final deliverance consists in total destruction of misery and the possession of the power of knowing and acting. The power of acting is threefold: (i) 'manojavitva', 'the power of doing anything instantly'; (ii) 'kāmarūpitva', 'the power of assuming variety of shapes, forms, bodies and senses as desired'; and (iii) 'vikramaṇadharmitva', 'the possession of power with the suspension of sensuous operations'. In the power of knowing is included among others the quality of 'sarvajñatva,' 'omniscience'. The long course of observances prescribed by the Pāśupata system was believed to lead to the acquisition of these miraculous powers.[1]

There is another Śaivite sect even more famous or notorious than the above-mentioned one, which has had a distinct appellation perhaps from as early a date. In *Maitri Upaniṣad* are mentioned worshippers of Śiva in the form of Kapālin, one who holds a skull. They are described as thieves. They wore their hair in a twisted knot and put on a red garment, ear-rings and skulls. Even earlier than that, *Pancaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa* mentions a class of people called Garāgir, 'swallowers of poison.' One of their characteristics was that they liked commoners' victuals as much as Brahmin's food. In the same work is mentioned another class of wanderers who are designated 'śama-nīcameḍhra', that is, those whose genitals hang low through control of passion.[2] L. D. Barnett was the first scholar to see a reference to Śaiva Yogis in the following description of the Vrātyas occurring in *Atharvaveda*: "He travels in a bullock-cart, with a harlot, a musician two couriers, and two footmen, and professes Śaiva magic with great fluency".[3]

References to Kapālin as an appellation of Śiva given above do not necessarily imply the existence of a sect named after it. We

believe that the earliest mention of the sect of Kāpālikas, evidently so called after their tutelary deity Śiva-Kapālin, is contained in a verse in *Gāthā-saptaśatī*[4] of Hāla. This collection of seven hundred verses was made by King Hāla and is generally ascribed to the first century A.D. It can be safely said that it is not later than the fourth century A.D. The reference is a skit on a female ascetic of the sect. Naturally she is called Kāpālikā. She is said to be very freshly ordained in the vow and is represented as besmearing her body with ashes from cremation-grounds. She is stated to have made the process of besmearing her body almost an interminable affair as the ashes were those of her paramour. In the same work is mentioned a temple of Āryā. The commentator equates it with the temple of Caṇḍikā. Daṇḍin [5], who flourished in the sixth century A.D., in his *Daśakumāracarita* describes a Kāpālika wizard, engaged in mystic and horrible rites, thus: "His body is ornamented with glittering pieces of human skull; he is smeared with ashes from funeral fire; he wears braids that look like streaks of lightning; with his left hand he is sacrificing steadily into a fierce fire crackling sesame and mustard." The Chinese pilgrim-traveller Hiuen Tsang, who visited India in the seventh century A.D., tells us that at Banaras he found about 10,000 Śaiva sectarians, whom R. G. Bhandarkar[6] rightly identifies with Pāśupatas, "who honoured Maheshwar, besmeared their bodies with ashes, went naked and tied their hair in knots."

In the farce, entitled *Mattavilāsaprahasana*, we have a picture of the Kāpālika sect in Tamil country in the 7th century A.D. presented in an exaggerated form. This Sanskrit work was written by Mattavilāsa, who is better known as Mahendra-Vikrama, a Pallava king of Kanchi. The Kāpālika introduced in the farce is designated Kapālī. But we know from the manner in which the Pāśupata sectarian is addressed, that the name of the Kapālī was Satyasoma. At the very beginning he is introduced as calling for his beloved, who is a female follower of the same sect

as his and bears the name of Devasomā. He is evidently drunk. In his intoxicated condition while calling out for his beloved, he falters into the name Somadevā. Soma, the component part in these names of Kāpālika sectarians, should be noted. A later author, who wrote in the last quarter of the eleventh century A.D., introduces the character Kāpālika to represent 'Soma - Siddhānta' incarnate. It should be clear from this that the sect of Kāpālikas represented the Soma school of Śaivism as the Pāśupatas represented the Paśupati school, the Śaivas the Śiva school and the Śāktas the Śakti school. The Soma school represents that system of doctrines in which Śiva is always accompanied by his consort Umā. Soma etymologically means one who is with Umā, the word being formed of the two Sanskrit components 'sa' and 'Umā'.

The origin of this doctrinal school is ancient. Umā Haimavatī is referred to in *Kenopaniṣad* as having realized Brahma. But she is not there spoken of as in any way connected with Śiva or even with Rudra. R. G. Bhandarkar[7] after discussing the passage at some length concludes: "since it was Umā that disclosed the nature of the spirit, it may be understood that the Brahman mentioned was Rudra-Śiva and Umā was his wife. It would thus appear that she had come to be so regarded some time before the Upaniṣad was composed." The same scholar draws upon the evidence of the rather late Upaniṣad *Atharvaśiras*, in which the Pāśupata vow is referred to and Umā mentioned along with Skanda, Vināyaka, Maheśvara, Vishnu, Brahmadeva and other deities. Finally, he opines that the Upaniṣad belongs to the Pāśupata sect.

Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad, which is one of the older Upaniṣads and is considered to be not a sectarian one,[8] raises Rudra-Śiva to the position of a supreme deity and even identifies him with Brahma. It prescribes the technique of Yoga to be followed by a devotee to secure mental concentration in a few succinctly worded verses. The result of that Yoga practice is declared to secure the

practitioner against disease, old age and even death. It further states that the first stage of Yogihood is indicated by the practitioner having lightness, robustness, non-covetousness, complexional pleasantness, vocal charm and nice smell. He passes only little urine and small excreta. The second stage evidently is self-realization itself.[9] It is only in a still later work, *Kaivalya-Upaniṣad*, that the object of Yogic concentration is declared to be Parameśvara accompanied by Umā. That Parameśvara is Śiva is clear from the qualifying adjectives. He is not only the Lord but is 'Nīlakaṇṭha' (blue-necked) and 'Trilocana' (three-eyed). The Muni, as the practitioner of Yoga is now called, concentrating his mind on Śiva in the company of Umā, attains the salvation of merging himself in the deity.[10]

The Sūtradhāra of *Mattavilāsaprahasana* introduces the Kapālin Satyasoma to the audience thus: "I am like the Kapālī who is overpowered by drink, whose only wealth is the skull that he carries in his hand and who has a youthful female as his companion". Coming on the stage with faltering gait the very first utterance of the Kapālin embodies the central doctrine of the attainment of mystic power as well as the practice of sexual indulgence. In his address to his beloved he says: "It is a real truth that by penance one achieves the power of taking on desired forms. For, by the proper observance of the great vow in a moment you have turned yourself into a great beauty." The conversation that follows only shows the Kapālin as utterly under the power of his youthful companion. The Kapālin utters the mystic formula 'Dhrṛṇa, Dhrṛṇa, namah Śivāya', the last two words of which mean 'bow to Śiva'.

It is curious that the Kapālin referring to the tenets and practices of Jain ascetics mentions one or two things which are repeated about them in the later drama *Prabodhacandrodaya* too, but which appear positively associated in later times with a section of Jogis. He says that they harass their ascetic followers

by requiring them to put on a soiled garment, to smear their bodies with dirt ('mala-dhāraṇa'), to pick out all hair, to observe regular times for meals and to keep celibate. Requirements of wearing soiled garment and smearing the body with dirt later became regular practices of a section of the Jogis. They can also attributed to the Jain ascetics only through a far-fetched satire. Jain ascetics try to avoid all actions wherein some life is likely to be killed. In the strict observance of the rule of non-killing (ahimsā), by implication they may be said not to wash their garments and bodies frequently or regularly. The skit on their vow of celibacy and on the regularity of their meals establishes the practice of indulgence in food and sex as a characteristic of the Kāpālikas.

Still more characteristic is the announcement of the Kapālin that he must wash his tongue with liquor to clear it of the contamination it contracted by the pronouncement of false doctrines of Jain ascetics. He and his youthful companion do not fail to carry out their avowal. We need not trouble the readers with the sacrilegious description of the tavern which the Kapālin gives or with the praise which his beloved lavishes on liquor. The latter describes the alms to be obtained at the tavern, naturally liquor, as Rudrabhāga or 'the portion of God Rudra', an aspect of Śiva.

The Kapālin in his intoxication keeps his begging bowl of skull aside. A dog smelling flesh, which was the remnant of the Kapālin's meal, carries it away. The Kapālin and his beloved evidently drink the liquor in another receptacle, which was a part of his paraphernalia. It was known 'goṡṛaṅga', cow-horn. When later some householder offers alms, the Kapālin discovers the absence of his bowl. He is in a fix. A Kāpālika can, in strict propriety, accept alms only in his skull-bowl. To refuse alms is to him a sin. Under the circumstances his clever beloved makes a suggestion which he agrees to. He takes the alms in his 'goṡṛaṅga',

cow-horn. But he is upset, because the essence of a Kāpālika's vow is that he should never part with his skull-bowl.

Without going into other satires we shall point out that the Kapālin's search for his bowl leads to a quarrel between him and a Banddha Bhikṣu and that a Pāśupata ascetic joins in it. Later perchance a madman comes on the scene with the Kapālin's bowl in his hands. They manage to snatch it away from him. After the departure of the Pāśupata ascetic, the Kapālin apologizes to the Bauddha Bhikṣu and departs in the company of his beloved.

An inscription of a nephew of Pulukeśin II of Maharashtra, ascribed to the first half of the seventh century A.D., records the grant of a village near Igatpuri in Nasik district for the worship of the god Kapāleśvara and for the maintenance of the Mahāvratins, 'those under the great vow', residing in his temple. R. G. Bhandarkar[11] describes 'Kapāleśvara as the Lord of the wearers of garlands of skull' and Mahāvratins as the Kāpālikas or Kālāmukhas.

In the temples of Elephanta (Gharapuri) in Bombay harbour and of Kailāsa at Verula (Ellora), the principal figure is Śiva in the aspect of Mahāyogi. He wears large ear-rings like those sported by Kānphāṭā Jogis, though they are shown in the lobes of his ear. The walls of these temples are covered with sculptures of ascetics in various yogic postures.[12] In the island of Salsette are caves known as Jogeśvari evidently called after Śiva the 'lord of yoga'. All these works belong to the eighth century A.D.

In the eighth century, the great Sanskrit poet Bhavabhūti, in his play *Mālatī-Mādhava*, utilizes for dramatic effect the practices of the devotees of a Śaiva sect, which though unnamed by him has been identified with that of the Kāpālikas. The centre from which these Kāpālikas came was Śrī Śaila in Karnataka.[13] Aghoraghaṇṭa, their chief, was under some great vow in pursuit of 'Siddhi' or the acquisition of mystic power. It is to be noted that

like the Kapālin of *Mattavilāsaprahasana*, the ascetic Aghoraghaṇṭa had a female disciple at his beck and call. Aghoraghaṇṭa's name signifies that already there were sub-sects within the sect of the Kāpālikas. It is not at all unreasonable to see in the name Aghoraghaṇṭa the prototype of Aghori ascetics. His female disciple, too, has a very significant name. It testifies not only to a sub-section within the sect but also to a further division in it. Kapālakuṇḍalā, which is the name of this female disciple, is one who wears ear-rings made out of skull. We shall presently see that among the Jogis the principal section is known as Kānphāṭā Jogis because they pierce their ears to accommodate large ear-rings. Kānphāṭā Jogis are further distinguished according to the material of which their rings are made. In the name Kapālakuṇḍalā we may see evidence of not only the existence of Kānphāṭā Jogis but also of a sub-division amongst them, which used skull-bone as the material for ear-rings. As we know from the story, Aghoraghaṇṭa and his associate Kapālakuṇḍalā both possessed supernatural powers of movement. The finale of the vow was to be the sacrifice of a girl to the goddess Cāmuṇḍā.

In the Tamilian south *Periyapurāṇa*, ascribed to the seventh or eighth century A.D., not only describes Śiva-Yogis but also Bhairava-Yogis. Though Kāpālikas were worshippers of Bhairava, they do not appear to have been referred to as Bhairava-Yogis in any North Indian or Sanskrit work. We may infer that Bhairava-Yogi was the vernacular appellation of the Kāpālikas of the Tamilian region. This inference gains support from the fact that Bhairava-Yogis are believed to have been northern ascetics moving about in the South. As described in *Periyapurāṇa*, the Bhairava-Yogi had braided hair, wore ashes on the forehead with a dot on it, donned a garland of flowers, a necklace of crystal beads, an ear-ring called the 'todu', and bangles on the arms and the legs. He had a begging bowl in the left hand and a trident and a small drum, 'ḍamaruka', in the right hand. He seems to have had partiality for flesh.[14]

Rāmānuja[15] in the eleventh century A.D. describes the principal characteristics of the Kāpālikas of his time. They maintained that to attain the highest bliss, one had to know the essence of six marks (mudrikā) and make their skilful use, and concentrate one's mind on the soul seated on the female organ. The six marks were (i) a necklace, (ii) an ornament, (iii) an ear-ornament, (iv) a crest-jewel, (v) ashes, and (vi) the sacred thread. The Kālāmukhas held that there were six means of attainment of desires both here and hereafter. They were (i) eating food in a skull; (ii) besmearing the body with funeral ashes; (iii) eating such ashes; (iv) holding a club; (v) keeping a pot of wine and (vi) worshipping God as seated therein. Here we see either a slight confusion between two sub-divisions of a sect or the reflection of the prevailing opinion that the Kālāmukhas were the more extreme of the two sects.

The eleventh century also furnishes us with a North-Indian Sanskrit work giving information of the sect under consideration. In *Prabodhacandrodaya*, which is a drama performed in the court of a Bundela king in the last quarter of the eleventh century A. D., we have a religio-philosophical play, which is designed to establish that the true philosophy is monistic Vedānta and that for the final realization of the truth the individual needs the help of devotion to Vishnu, 'Vishnu-bhakti'. Prevailing schools of religio-philosophical thought are introduced as characters along with moral or spiritual virtues. The prevailing schools of thought having to be the vanquished parties have their weak points well stressed.

Though Jain ascetics are not our concern here, we shall give here a description of the appearance of one as given in *Prabodhacandrodaya*, having some Jogi attributes. It is to be noted, first of all, that he is a Digambara, sky-clad or naked one, and is boldly declared to be impotent. He is bedaubbed with trickling dirt and has, therefore, a horrifying appearance. He had

all his hairs picked out and, being stark naked, was a sight to turn away from. He held in his hand a bundle of peacock feathers.[16] Two of the attributes present in this description, namely, being besmeared with dirt and picking out of hair, figure in the earlier South-Indian work *Mattavilāsaprahasana*. The bundle of peacock feathers in the hands of this Jain ascetic excites our interest. As we shall see later, the present Jogis have appropriated this paraphernalia of magic.

The Jain ascetic is first presented on the stage as Digambara-Siddhānta or the Digambara doctrine incarnate. But afterwards throughout he is presented as and designated Kṣapaṇaka, the usual appellation of Jain ascetics current among non-Jains in those times.

The Jain ascetic and the Bauddha Bhikṣu, who enters the stage after him, begin to wrangle over the weak points of their doctrines. While they are thus engaged in edifying the audience or rather getting themselves laughed at by it, the author presents on the stage a third character to engage in the fray. The stage direction reads: "Here enters Soma-Siddhānta in the garb of a Kāpālika." Soma-Siddhānta presents and describes himself thus:[17] "Here I am a denizen of the cremation-grounds well-adorned with a necklace made of human bones, taking my meals in a human skull and having had my eyes made clear and sharp with collyrium in the form of Yoga, able to see the distinct world as not distinct and separate from the Lord (Īśvara)." The Jain ascetic calling upon him to explain his doctrinal way of life addresses him as Kāpālika as well as 'Nara-asthi-muṇḍa-mālā-dhāraka', that is, one who has put on a necklace of human bones and skull. The Kāpālika unabashedly declares that according to their doctrine, Mahābhairava, their tutelary deity, is to be appeased with blood oozing from freshly cut human heads. He adds that the Kāpālikas offer fresh human flesh as oblation in the fire, and finish off the observance of a vow by drinking liquor out of a human skull.[18]

The Kāpālika provoked by opposition gloriously proclaims his power of bringing down the great deities of the Hindu pantheon and of stopping the motion of the heavenly bodies. He avows his readiness to submerge the earth in water, and to clear it of it in no time by drinking the whole off. Further questioning by the Jain ascetic enrages the Kāpālika, who with his sword drawn stands prepared to offer the Jain ascetic himself as an offering, and, be it noted, not to Mahābhairava, his tutelary deity, but to the house-wife of that divinity. The divinity himself is referred to as Bharga. The commentator describes the house-wife of Bharga as Mahābhairavi. The Kāpālika is sure that he would be able to appease not only the great goddess with the hot blood oozing out of the freshly cut head of the Jain ascetic but also the large class of goblins, who would be invited to the feast with the sounding of the swinging 'ḍamaru', a specific type of small drum invariably associated with the Bhairava form of Śiva. The compassionate Bauddha Bhikṣu intervenes and saves the life of the poor Jain ascetic. The Kāpālika whose rage is assuaged to some extent now completes the description of his doctrine by informing his listeners of the nature of final salvation. It consists in the individual soul living in the full enjoyment of all objects of sense in the presence and company of Śiva in the embrace of Pārvati, the individual himself having the body of Śiva and being in the embrace of his own beloved in the form of Pārvati. Naturally the two other ascetics, Jain and Bauddha, though degenerate, cannot now swallow this gross condition as final salvation.[19]

The Kāpālika at this stage finds it necessary to call in some help to convince his wavering listeners. And the situation provides the dramatist with the appropriate occasion to bring on the stage the female companion and beloved of the male Kāpālika. Significantly she is introduced here in the abstract character of Śraddhā, Faith. It is necessary to bear in mind that with the application of the Sāṅkhya doctrine of three 'guṇa's, even abstract qualities, whether psychological or spiritual, can be of three kinds. Faith,

thus, can be low, fair or good according to the nature of the doctrines which form its resting-place. Śraddhā of the Soma-Siddhānta presents herself on the stage in the form of a Kapālinī. It is to be noted that, as in *Mattavilāsaprahasana*, in this drama too, though the Kāpālika addresses Kapālinī as 'my beloved', the latter addresses the Kāpālika as Bhagavān, 'Revered Sir'. The female ascetic companion retains the attitude proper for a disciple; but the male ascetic Kāpālika treats her as his mistress. In this play he goes even further and uses her as a whore.

On her appearance on the stage, the Kapālinī requests orders from her lord, the Kāpālika, who instructs her to embrace the Bauddha ascetic. She immediately acts her part. Small wonder, the Bauddha ascetic, who is a degenerate and whose tenets and doctrinal life have to be represented as being without substance, immediately succumbs to her endearing embrace. He declares that the life of a Kāpālika is happy, and his tenets, the Soma-Siddhānta, are praiseworthy. He proudly proclaims his conversion over to that doctrine, giving it its alternative appellation of Pārameśvara, promulgated by the Great Lord. He begs to be given the initiation, which again he designates Pārameśvari and not Kāpāliki. The Jain ascetic, who has not the benefit of Kapālinī's embrace, castigates the Bauddha ascetic as having been contaminated. The Kāpālika forthwith asks Kapālinī to catch hold of the Jain ascetic. She immediately embraces him with precisely the same result as in her previous embrace; and the Jain ascetic begs to be initiated into the tenets of Mahābhairava. The triumphant Kāpālika asks the two converts to sit down and taking his bowl in his hand meditates for a second. His female companion announces that the bowl is filled with liquor. The Kāpālika having drunk some liquor out of it offers the bowl-cup to his new disciples. They hesitate, both because it is liquor and also because it is contaminating remnant. The Kāpālika has his remedy handy. He asks his female companion to drink a little liquor out of the bowl-cup and to present the remnant to his new disciples to drink. He argues to

them, if a thing becomes contaminating because of my mouth touching it, it cannot be so if it passes through the mouth of a female. Because, as he puts it, even the 'Tairthikas' declare the mouth of a female to be always pure. The distinction that the Kāpālika here draws between his and the other sects on the one hand and the orthodox Hindu system on the other deserves to be noted. 'Tairthika' is rendered as Smārta by the commentator.[20] Smārta is the standard appellation for the school of monistic Vedānta. 'Tairthika' here appears to us to have a wider signification than the term Smārta. We think that it is better contrasted with Tāntric. Hiuen Tsang's reference to Tirthika quoted earlier supports our interpretation. Kāpālikas may thus be looked upon as Tāntric ascetics.

Śraddhā Kapālinī alertly carries out the instructions of her beloved master. And here again it is the more degenerate Bauddha Bhikṣu who succumbs to the temptation first and completely. He quaffs off a quantity of liquor and falls into the mood of praising its quality. The Jain ascetic, in the meanwhile, gets nervous lest the Bauddha Bhikṣu might drain the cup to its dregs. He immediately addresses him and asks him not to exhaust the whole contents as he too wants to drink some of the liquid already tasted by Kapālinī. The bowl-cup is duly passed on to him.

When the Jain ascetic and Bauddha Bhikṣu fall asleep, the jubilant Kapālinī suggests to her beloved that the occasion was fit enough for a dance and, on his joining her, both of them begin to dance. The Jain ascetic, who seems to recover first, draws his companion's attention to the artistic dance of the Kāpālika and the Kapālinī and suggests that they too should join them. The Kāpālika seeing the faltering steps of his new disciples and the references of one of them to the pleasures of Kapālinī seizes the opportunity to drive home to them the great powers and merits of his doctrines. He says: "Here in our system we attain all the eight great achievements ('mahāsiddhi')[21] and yet they do not

prove a hindrance in our way of salvation. In other systems, on the other hand, even the ordinary achievements ('prākṛtasiddhi') namely, powers of influencing, attracting, mystifying, stupifying, exciting and removing, prove a positive hindrance to further spiritual progress.[22]

The Bauddha Bhikṣu, a little more self-controlled, finds the Jain ascetic getting more and more intoxicated. He suggests to the Kāpālika that something should be done to sober him down. The Kāpālika welcoming the suggestion offers his half-chewed betel-leaf sedative to the Jain ascetic. Its chewing sobers him in a way; and he asks the Kāpālika whether the mystic power, with which he procured liquor, can enable him to control human beings too. The Kāpālika blatantly declares that by his power he can fetch not only any unmarried daughter of 'Yakṣa', or a 'Vidyādharī', but also the wife of any 'Nāga' or any god. And here the interesting interlude ends. Later the Kāpālika is vanquished by 'Vishnubhakti' or devotion to Vishnu.[23]

Briggs has drawn attention to the rings in the split ears of the sculpture of Śiva sculptured on the phallus in the temple of Parashurameshwara in the North Arcot district. Rings worn in this manner are a characteristic of the present day Kānphāṭā Yogis.[24]

Ānandagiri, the author of *Śankaravijaya*, lived either a little after or a little before the author of *Prabodhacandrodaya*. He has described the Kāpālikas that Śankarācārya met at Ujjayini, which seems to have been one of their strong centres in Śankarācārya's time. He tells us that Śankarācārya converted the leader of one section among them but did not waste his effort on the other more extreme section. Both the sections had Bhairava for their tutelary deity. Members of the moderate section wore matted hair, had crystal beads and made a half-moon-mark on the forehead. The hair of the more extreme section were worn entangled without being formed into a crest. Their leader, whose

name significantly was Unmattabhairava, had smeared his body with funeral ashes. He had worn a black streak on his forehead and put on a necklace of skulls. His dress consisted only of a waist-cord, to which was tied a tiger's skin to cover the privities. He carried in his right hand a bell and in his left a skull. He was calling out Śambhu, Bhairava and Kālīśa. The Kāpālikas professed that they sharpened their understanding by drinking wine, by eating particular kind of food, which was perhaps a disgusting substance, and by being embraced by the 'śakti' of Kapālin, that is Bhairava.[25]

Mādhava Vidyāraṇya in his *Śankaradigvijaya*[26] also describes Śankarācārya's contact with Kāpālikas. He gives the name of their leader as Krakaca. He does not specify the place where the contact took place but the commentator fixes it as Ujjayini. Vidyāraṇya describes this exploit of Śankarācārya as having taken place after he visited the capital of Vidarbhas. There the Vidarbha king accepted his discipleship. And when Śankarācārya expressed his desire to proceed to the Karnatak country, the king, to dissuade him from going there, pointed out that that country was infested by a net-work of the evil and jealous Kāpālikas. King Sudhanvā, who was one of the disciples present, on the other hand, encouraged him to proceed as desired. It is after this conversation that Vidyāraṇya describes Śankarācārya as having proceeded to meet the Kāpālikas. The context, thus, favours the placing of Śankarācārya's contact with Kāpālikas in some southern spot rather than at Ujjayini. May it be that Śankarācārya actually went to Śrī Śaila which, according to Bhavabhūti's account, was the centre of Kāpālikas? By the time of the commentator of *Śankaradigvijaya*, Śrī Śaila had ceased to be an important Kāpālika centre. He naturally understood the contact to have taken place at a spot which in his time still continued to be the centre of the Kāpālikas. If the above reasoning is correct we will have to accept that the importance of Śrī Śaila as a Kāpālika centre continued till the fourteenth century, the time of Vidyāraṇya.

The aforementioned conclusion, which is almost inevitable if the argument is granted, is not satisfactory or fully borne out by other facts of religious history. To hold that the Kāpālikas with all their extreme and some disgusting practices continued to flourish not only after Śankarācārya's activity, but also after the work of Rāmānujācārya, after that of Basava, who organized Vīra-śaivism, and even after that of Madhvācārya, who promulgated a system tolerant of both Śaivism and Vaishnavism, would mean that the great and noble work of these teachers, organizers and writers, in the cause of purifying and ennobling faith and observance proved utterly futile.

As a matter of fact, there is definite evidence to show that the sect of Kālāmukhas which was, as R. G. Bhandarkar has pointed out, according to Rāmānuja, the more extreme section of the Kāpālikas and which was widely spread over the Karnatak country, had entered on activities which clearly show that it had purged itself of, or had at least suppressed, the more objectionable practices. There is an inscription of the twelfth century A. D. which describes the activities of the monastery (maṭha) of the Kālā-mukhas at Balegame in Mysore territory. It is believed to be their most important centre at that time. It is described as "a great seat of learning where grow crops in the shape of the hair of the human body standing erect from joy at the worship of the Siva–Linga, the place appointed for the performance of the rites of the Saiva Brahmacharin ascetics, the place of the study of the four Vedas, namely, the R. V., Yajus, Sama and the Atharva, with the Angas . . . It was the place where commentaries were composed on the Kaumara, Paniniya, Sakatayana, Bauddha, and other six systems of philosophy, where books were composed on the Akula Siddhanta, on Patanjala, and other Yoga–Shastras, on the eighteen Puranas and the Dharmashastras as well as on Kavya and Nataka, a place of all kinds of Natika (dancing); the place where food was freely distributed to sufferers, to the destitute, to the lame, the blind, the deaf, to story-tellers, singers, drummers, genealogists,

dancers and eulogists, to the naked, the wounded, Ksapanaka, Ekadandi, Tridandi, Hamsa, Parmahamsa, and other mendicants from various countries; the place where suitable medicine was given to various diseased persons; a place of security from fear for all living things."[27]

The order of Jogi ascetics has so many features in common with the Kāpālikas that we believe them to be a transformation of the latter school. The Jogis traditionally derive their school from god Śiva himself. Once Śiva communicated some spiritual knowledge to Pārvati. It was so special and doctrinal that thereafter Pārvati got the male appellation of Udonātha and Śankara became Ādinātha. Pārvati who, according to our account, is called Udonātha, is the second of the Nāthas. One of the three different traditions recorded by Briggs[28] gives Ude as the second of the nine Nāthas and as the founder of the Jogi school of asceticism. The spiritual doctrine is derived from Śakti and is passed on through Śiva to Ude. But though neither Śakti nor Śiva is actually designated as Nātha, yet we may infer that the account takes Śiva as its first Nātha and counts its nine Nāthas beginning with him. There is however no indication that Ude was Pārvati. In another account Śiva himself as Ādinātha is represented to have taught the peculiar doctrine, the Yoga as it is called, to Pārvati. But neither is she dubbed Ude or Udonātha nor is she counted as one of the nine Nāthas. The third account derives the school from Ādinātha without identifying him with Śiva but is not current among the followers.

In our account, as in the second account of Briggs, one miraculous individual in the womb of a fish heard the knowledge as it was being imparted to Pārvati. He is given the name of Matsyendranātha, Matsyendra, lord of the fish, having been regarded as the designation of the individual. All accounts agree that the discipleship of Matsyendranātha fell on Gorakhnātha to whom the organization of Jogis in general, and the Kānphāṭās in particular, is unanimously traced.

As usual, there is a good deal of difference of opinion about the date of Gorakh, who was by all accounts an exceptional individual and a great miracle-worker. He is looked upon as more than a human teacher[29] and more or less like Krishna, and has at least a few temples dedicated to him, where he is worshipped as a deity. We accept the date suggested for him by Briggs as on the whole best supported by available evidence. Gorakhnātha may be taken to have lived about the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century A. D. and anyway not later than 1200 A. D.[30]

Among various activities of Gorakhnātha, conversion and organization are well-known. His role in the popularization among his followers of what is called Haṭhayoga is not easy to ascertain. He is believed to have been a considerable writer. *Gorakṣaśataka*, which is the fundamental text of the Gorakhnāthis, is unanimously attributed to him. Briggs states about his teaching that it is a mingling of Yoga and Tantra doctrines.[31]

Yoga is an old school of philosophical thought and practice. It is called Pātañjala yoga. It is defined in *Yogasūtra* itself as 'citta-vṛtti-nirodhah', that is, control of mental dispositions. Its simple technique as a method of achieving mental control, as we have shown already, is traceable to the Upaniṣads and is succinctly summarized by Lord Krishna in *Bhagavadgītā*. It is generally called Rājayoga as opposed to Haṭhayoga. The end of Haṭhayoga is commonly believed to be the attainment of mystic powers. Washing of stomach ('dhauti'), certain postures and contortions of the body and other exercises are believed to excite the plexus of nerves called 'Kuṇḍalinī'. In the ideology of the Haṭhayoga occur the concept of 'Cakra's, wheels, and the idea of the soul being embedded in one of them. It developed from the older elements as practised outside the Upaniṣadic schools into the system that it is.

The doctrine of 'nāḍi's, which is intimately connected with Kuṇḍalinī, is very old. We read of the 'Piṅgalā nāḍi' in *Chāndo-*

gyopaniṣad, which speaks of hundred and one 'nāḍi's as proceeding from the heart, out of which one, it declares, as proceeding to the head. It further suggests that a soul departing through it attains immortality. Evidently here is a reference to the 'Suṣumnā nāḍi'.[32]

The theory of 'nāḍi's and their significance for spiritual life appears in a more developed form in the Upaniṣad named *Maitrī* or *Maitrāyaṇīya*.[33] The Yoga preached in it can be uncritically identified with Haṭhayoga as far as the anatomico-physiological basis and its technique are concerned. In all probability it was such a view that led Tessitori[34] to make a rather important observation about the relation between the Kānphāṭās and the Upaniṣadic practices. He remarks: "The close alliance of the Kānphāṭā system to the yoga both of Patanjali and of the *Upaniṣads* is visible from the prominent part given to the yoga praxis as well as to the mystical theory, to the circles in the body (*chakra, kausala*), arteries (*nāla*), vital air (*pavana*), and breaths (*hamsa*)". It is necessary to point out here that there is not the least reference to the bodily 'cakra's in the older Upaniṣads, though *Śvetaśvatara* (II) mentions the great gains in physical and mental aspects that accrue from the practice of Prāṇāyāma, breath-control. Of the latter Upaniṣads, *Amṛtabindu* and *Maitrī*[35] have a direct reference to Nādabrahma or to the theory of mystic sounds. In the latter, there is a direct mention only of the air rising up and climbing up round the tree bough by bough, which the commentator interprets as a reference to the 'Mūladhara', 'the mystical circle above the organs of generation.' The yoga system laid down in this Upaniṣad consists only of the six practices of Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhyāna, Dhāraṇā, Tarka and Samādhi. *Yogasūtra* of Patanjali, the standard authority on Yoga philosophy, lays down eight 'aṅga's (limbs) of yoga. Of the six 'aṅga's of *Maitrī-Upaniṣad* with the exception of Tarka, the remaining five occur in it. Yama, Niyama and Āsana are the additional three. In the description of these 'aṅga's there is no reference to any 'Cakra' or even to 'nāḍi's other than 'Suṣumnā'. Even the commentator

explaining the passages[36] does not go beyond some of the Upaniṣadic passages that we have referred to in our explanation.

As Cowell has pointed out, even the earlier portions of *Maitrī-Upaniṣad* must be assigned to a late period. The sixth chapter in which the yoga system is laid down contains quotations not only from Manu but also from some Vaishnava sources. We do not think that this latter portion of the Upaniṣad is older than about the sixth or seventh century A. D., and may even be later. Our view that the system of Haṭhayoga was being developed from its Upaniṣadic skeleton outside the Brahmanic or Upaniṣadic tradition stands well supported.

In this connection we should like to state the interesting and instructive piece of information that we find in *Maitrī-Upaniṣad*. In the seventh chapter are described hindrances to true knowledge. In the list are contained some anti-Brahmanic practices and groups of people. The specific groups mentioned are declared to be unholy or unfit for heaven. The Vaidikas, the Brahmanic followers, are exhorted not to reside in the same place with these 'thieves'. One of these groups is formed by the Kapālins, who wear ear-rings and red garments as cloaks of respectability. The commentator rightly translates Kapālin as Kapāla Bhikṣus, that is, mendicants using a skull as a bowl. He offers the further interesting information that ear-rings of these people were made out of conch-shell.

By the time Gorakhnātha appears on the scene, partly the Kāpālikas and partly the Tāntric teachers had developed the simple system of the yoga of the Upaniṣads into a technique approaching the full doctrine of Haṭhayoga. It is the Tāntric form of the doctrine of 'nāḍi's and the technique of controlling and exciting them that forms the Haṭhayoga. Gorakhnātha's teacher Matsyendranātha seems to have been associated with Tāntric Buddhism. Gorakhnātha must have derived his Haṭhayoga from the Tāntric literature and practice through his teacher. Evidently

with his own refinements he promulgated the knowledge and practice among his followers and laid it down in his *Haṭhayogapradīpikā*.

There is a chapter in *Bhagvadgītā*, the sixth, wherein Lord Krishna has given a few directions to be followed by Karmayogis, as the followers of his philosophy are called, in order to secure concentration on their object of worship. The great Maharashtrian expositor of *Bhagvadgītā*, a great ascetic, a great saint, a great poet, commonly considered to be the founder of a new devotional school, calls this particular chapter of *Bhagvadgītā* its kernel. What is more interesting and instructive from our point of view is that he proclaims to his readers the need to go outside the regular tradition and text of *Bhagvadgītā* to explain the full implications of the Yoga described in the chapter. After this introduction, he gives in his poetic speech a good description of the technique of the Haṭhayoga. His declaration that he would not have been able to do justice to the treatment of yoga but for the fact of his having received the knowledge from his preceptor Nivṛttināṭha,[37] though not unique, is perhaps more significant than similar declarations in some other chapters. His warning and exhortation, at a certain stage of his description of 'yoga', not to mind the usual mystic powers that would accrue to the student is an important admission about the ordinary practitioners of Haṭhayoga.

We have seen that the Kāpālika in the drama *Prabodhacandrodaya* blatantly boasts of these mystic attainments and proclaims the uses to which he can put them. Gorakhnātha does not seem to do the same. According to his teaching the final result of Haṭhayoga is declared to be: "By cleansing the nadis, the Prana is restrained as desired, the digestive fire is kindled, internal sound is heard, and one becomes diseaseless."[38] It would not be wrong to conclude that the important objective for the Haṭhayogi was the enjoyment of some ecstatic experience whose approach was heralded by the internal sounds referred to above. Though miracles are attributed to Gorakhnātha, in his system of Yoga he has

not advocated their use. It does not follow from this that his followers, like the Kāpālika figuring in *Prabodhacandrodaya*, did not boast of them or use them.

The little information of the state of affairs prevalent in Maharashtra in Jnāneśvara's time and immediately before him which tradition offers indicates that the Nathapānthi Jogis had spread their net-work in Maharashtra through the help of mystic powers and were consequently dreaded. Jnāneśvara's chief contestant is the Nāthapanthi Jogi Cāṅgadeva, who might have been the Mahanta of a Jogi monastery not far away from Paiṭhaṇa, where Jnāneśvara first made his mark. And Cāṅgadeva is traditionally represented as commonly riding a tiger and using a live cobra to whip it, thus demonstrating his control over nature.

It appears from the account given by Briggs[39] of the principal teachings of *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* and *Śivasaṁhitā*, both Tāntric works, and of *Gheraṇḍasaṁhitā*, a non - Tāntric work, all of which appear to belong to a time later than Gorakhnātha, that the ideal of power-achievement was set forth therein. In the Haṭhayoga, breath-control is esteemed for its great efficacy in producing occult powers. A small detail connected with the occasion of the production of *Gheraṇḍasaṁhitā* deserves to be mentioned for its relevance to our discussion here. Gheraṇḍa was a Vaishnavite of Bengal. And his 'Saṁhitā' embodies the teaching that he imparted to his disciple Caṇḍa-Kāpāli, that is, Kāpāli who was 'canda', fierce. Thus the Kāpālika sect and its association persists in the Nāthapanthi Jogis. We may end this discussion by observing that the aspect of mystic powers which was stressed by Kāpālikas in their yoga and which was incorporated and developed further in the Haṭhayoga still forms a prominent feature of the Nāthapanthis of to-day.

There are two principal orders among Jogis: Nāthapanthis and Aghorapanthis. Nāthapanthis are all followers of Gorakh-

nātha. Though they claim that they receive in their order none but the members of the twice-born castes, it is clear that not only Ahirs, Rabaris but even Dheds and such other people send recruits to the Nāthapanthi order. They also admit females. And though no caste restrictions are observed, yet sex-differentiation is respected. The male Nāthas may eat together irrespective of caste. But they will not allow the female Nāthanīs to eat with them. They must eat separately by themselves.

Nāthapanthi Jogis are generally described as having two divisions, Aughara, and Kānphāṭā. This way of representing the organization of Nāthapanthis does not seem to us to be absolutely correct and has actually led to some undesirable confusion. The Augharas - also called Oghaḍs – are, though erroneously, not infrequently identified with Aghoris. In reality Aughara is an ascetic who has been initiated and has accepted almost the whole way of life of Nāthapanthi Jogis; only he has not gone through the last stage of initiation which he is entitled to do after a certain period of apprenticeship. He does not accept any aspect of the way of living characteristic of the Aghorapanthis which is not common to the Jogis as a whole. By not going through the last stage of initiation he remains devoid of the characteristic mark which gives the Nāthapanthi the appellation of Kānphātā.

In appearance the Jogis have much in common. They can be distinguished fairly easily from all other Saiva Samnyāsis except perhaps Alakhwālas. They wear ochre-coloured garment and are thus distinguished from Vaishnava ascetics. They carry a bowl without any handle. At present it is generally made of coconut shell which is blackened. In shape and form it is not unlike the upper half of the human skull. This particular shape of the bowl and the absence of handle proclaim its descent from human skull, which the Kāpālikas were enjoined and wont to carry. Nowadays bowls of any material that is not forbidden to an ascetic and provided with a handle are seen in the hands particu-

larly of the Kānphāṭā Jogis. Round the neck Nāthapanthis wear what they call the sacred thread. It is a piece of thread made of black sheep's wool about two feet in total length. In its centre there is a Rudraksha bead and a whistle held by a cotton cord. The whistle is a very important mark and appendage. It is made generally of the horn either of a buck or of a rhinoceros. It is called 'siṅganāda', 'horn-sound'. We wish to draw the attention of our readers to the horn-article of the Kāpālika in *Mattavilāsa-prahasana*. The use of 'siṅganāda' associates it with food, as the only occasion when the whistle is blown is at the beginning of a meal. The whole ensemble of the sacred thread, Rudraksha and the whistle is called 'Śailī'. The 'Śailī' is an important item of the ascetic kit, for if it is broken the wearer cannot take his meal till a new one is substituted. Not infrequently the Jogis in general, and the Kānphāṭās in particular, wear one or two additional rosaries made of crystal (sphaṭika) beads. They carry a pair of longish iron tongs in their hand, to which the Aghori adds a skewer.

The Kānphāṭā Jogi stands out marked from other Nāthapanthi, the Aughar, by the large ear-rings or ear-discs which he wears in the hollow of the ear. At the last stage of initiation of a Nāthapanthi, his preceptor drives a double-edged knife, called Bhairavi knife, through the hollow of his disciple's ears to make a hole for the reception of the most important mark of a Nāthapanthi ascetic. When the wound heals up, a large ring either flat or round is put in each ear. The flat one is called Darśana and the round one Kuṇḍala. It may be as big as seven inches in circumference. The most favourite material of which it is made is the horn of a rhinoceros. The ear-ring whether Darśana or Kuṇḍala is technically called Mudrā. The Kānphāṭā derives his name from this fact of his ears being torn for the insertion of the Mudrā, the mark or the stamp. The importance of the ring in the properly perforated ear is so great that if by chance the ear of any ascetic is completely torn he is immediately excommunicated. We are informed that

formerly such an ascetic used to be buried alive. Whereas the torn ear of the ascetic gives him his group-name of Kānphāṭā, the appellation of the ring provides the name for his sectarian philosophy. The philosophy of Nāthapanthis is designated Mudri-Darśana.

The Aughara is supposed to take a name ending in Dāsa, but Kānphāṭās must add the suffix Nātha to their names. The general convention about the name is not always respected by the Augharas. Some of them feel important enough to add prestige by taking up the suffix Nātha. Dr. Chapekar met one Avadhūtanātha at Trimbak-Nasik who was an Aughara. When Nāthapanthis meet, they hail each other with the word 'Ādeśa', which means injunction. The hail must be considered to be esoteric.

A popular Sanskrit verse current among Samnyāsis is evidently either a complete misrepresentation or a hostile exaggeration of the way of life prevalent among the Nāthapanthis. They are charged in it with not shaving their head, not observing fasts, not visiting sacred places, not keeping the 'agnihotra' (burning fire) and not observing celibacy. We know for a fact that not only are all Nāthapanthis shaved at the time of initiation but later, too, many of them attend to their hair in the same manner. It is true that they do not observe many fasts. Most of them observe only one fast—that of Mahāśivarātri, 14th day of the dark half of the Hindu month of Māgha, which is sacred to Śiva. For their food they take any eatable except beef and pork. In actual practice they may even show a little partiality for meat. If it is so, they are only some degrees less rigid than some sections of the Nāgās. There is a tradition in Bengal that Nāthapanthis are Śaiva ascetics who were ostracized for their addiction to liquor. To-day the Nāthapanthis do not admit that they drink liquor. We think that though on the whole there is a growing sentiment against liquor among Nāthapanthis, yet in practice its use is by no means so rare as their leaders profess. It is not merely their frankness

and honesty that makes them admit abundant use of intoxicating herbs like 'gānjā' and 'bhāṅga' but also the fact that traditionally Bhairava is represented as favouring the use of these narcotics. The ultimate aim of Haṭhayoga being to produce a kind of cessation of ordinary consciousness, these drugs conveniently make up for the deficiencies which may occur or inhere in the technique of yoga.

The Aghoris are a few degrees further removed in all these matters. They show their utter indifference to all mundane conventions and feelings by eating anything without the slightest demur. They are known to eat even dung to extract alms from people. They are believed to eat human flesh whenever available and they even rake up corpses for the purpose.

The Nāthapanthis may live in monasteries or may wander about. They are well-known for their wanderings. There are amongst them some who have visited all the well-known places of pilgrimage in our country twice or even thrice. Large numbers of them used to achieve the coveted end of visiting the temple of goddess Hingalāj on the Makran coast of Baluchistan. Every Nāthapanthi has a passionate desire, which he generally succeeds in achieving, to circumambulate the Narmada at least once. And there are many who do it twice and thus conform to the Hindu norm of religious behaviour. The ascetic who wants to do this starts from the mouth of the Narmada at Broach and proceeding either along the right or the left bank to its source at Amarkantak returns from the other side to Broach. Those who go on this mission have to observe certain rules. They must never have any money. They must walk bare-footed and only for eight months in a year. The four months of the monsoon they must pass in one place, a rule reminiscent of the ancient regulations of Buddhist Saṅgha.

The Nāthapanthis have provided for their ascetics a large number of monastic centres where they can stay. These centres

are called either 'ākhāḍā's, a term with which we are now familiar, or 'Dalicā's, a term peculiar to them. As detailed distribution and account of these monastic centres have been ably given by Briggs we desist from going over the same ground. We shall only point out that no important Nāthapanthi centre is known to exist south of Nasik–Bombay nor is there any east of Gorakhpur–Banaras. And even within this area the most important centres and the sphere of their greatest influence lie west of the line drawn between Kanauj and Ujjayini. After the separation of Pakistan in 1947 most of the centres in Western Pakistan were closed down. But very recently Mahant Manmohandas of Dargah Pir Rattan Nath visited Kabul and was enthusiastically received by his followers there.

The tremendous growth of Vaishnava cults, some of which are very esoteric in their doctrines and practices, combined with the spread of Islam effectively checked Nāthapantha in Bengal, where according to tradition some of its early triumphs were registered. The development of Lingāyatism and the great spread of the two Vaishnava sects promulgated by Rāmānuja and Madhva after the eleventh century A.D. made things very difficult for the old sect of Kālāmukha–Kāpālikas. We saw from the evidence of a twelfth century inscription that the Kālāmukhas in South India had so far modified their ways and activities as to approximate to those of the Dasanāmi Samnyāsis excepting for the basic philosophical doctrine. This modification indicated that they were on the road to extinction as a separate school of ascetics. The Lingāyat school and the Vaishnava schools between them shortened the course and brought about the culmination quickly and completely. No centre of the Nāthapanthis worth the name has since been reported south of the Krishna.

At a Nāthapanthi monastic centre the chief deity is Bhairava. But the most important characteristic of such a centre is the 'Dhuni' or the continuous fire. On entering the building of a

Nāthapanthi monastic centre the first thing that one catches sight of is the smouldering fire technically called 'Dhuni' which comes from the Sanskrit root 'dhun', to waft. It is the existence of a Nāthapanthi 'Dhuni' in one of the famous localities of Bombay that has given it its name 'Pāe-Dhuni'. The Marathi name of this locality, namely 'Pāyadhuni', better proclaims the origin and association of this Kānphāṭā centre. It might have belonged to the Pāda section of the Nāthapanthis, which figures as one of the twelve sections in two out of the four lists of centres which we have been able to gather. By the side of the Dhuni is a striking object called 'Moracula'. It is a bundle of long peacock feathers which is quite often used by Nāthapanthis in their magical practices. We remind our readers of the description of a Digambara Jain monk given in *Prabodhacandroya*. The only thing that he carried in his hand was a bundle of peacock feathers. Even to-day Jain monks are seen carrying such a bundle in their hands.* As we shall have occasion to mention later, one sect of Vaishnava ascetics, the Rāmasanehis and a section of the Rāmānandis use such a bundle in their religious practices.

Gorakhnātha, with the exception of Caitanya, is probably unique among all sect-founders, to have dedicated to him a number of temples, where his followers carry out his worship as if of a deity. Yet the Nāthapanthi monastic centres do not always keep an image of Gorakhnātha. Every one of them, on the other hand, has in its compound, especially on the front side, a number of tombs of deceased Nāthas. The inmates, in their daily worship include the more important of those tombs, or 'samādhi's. They are the objects that proclaim at sight the monastic centre of the Nāthapanthis. Through them the Nāthapanthi as the lineal descendant of the Kāpālika is able to fulfil the almost peremptory injunction to live in the cremation-ground. In the midst of these tombs and

* As a component of a magician's paraphernalia a bundle of feathers ('picchika') finds its earliest mention in Dandin's *Dasakumaracarita* (p. 56), a work of the 6th century A.D.

'samadhi's, he lives, as it were, in the burial ground. Wherever possible, as for example at Ahmedabad, he has his centre by the side of a cremation-ground itself. The Nāthapanthis are so particular about proclaiming their connection with the cremation-ground that some of their leaders are named after it. The chief of their centre at Trimbakeśvar is named Masāṇanātha. 'Masāṇa' is vernacular for the Sanskrit word 'smaśāna', cremation-ground.

The chief or the Mahanta of a Nāthapanthi 'ākhāḍā' or 'dalicā' is always known as the Pir. Pir commonly connotes a Muslim saint. As to why a Nāthapanthi chief has come to be called a Pir, one explanation given is that the Nāthapanthis by the adoption of the term contrived to escape utter annihilation at the hands of the Muslims. The explanation appears plausible. First, the most important centres of the Nāthapanthis are situated in predominantly Muslim localities. Kandahar in Afganistan, Tilla in West Punjab, Dhinodhar in Kachha have all a predominant Muslim population to face. Second, the partiality of the Nāthapanthis for the goddess Hingalaj on the Makran coast must have brought them in closer contact with Muslim population. Third, we know it from history that the Nāthapanthis had repeated trouble with the Muslims. The temple of Gorakhnātha at Gorakhpur is known to have been destroyed by the Muslims twice or thrice, the Nāthapanthis having rebuilt it every time.[40] The daily course of life that is lived at Nāthapanthi centres, typically in the past, approximates the life of a Muslim Pir. The inmates mutter a few prayers, perhaps do a few of the Yogic postures and join in the common worship of the deity Bhairava. Rest of the time so long as they are at the centre they are more often than not discovered in the semi-tranced condition induced by narcotic drugs. As much time as is available is taken up by the practice of minor magic in the service of a large number of people that go on visiting the centre to seek help in their difficulties.

The Nāthapanthis with their twelve sections have a central organization called Bhek-Bārah-Pantha for general supervision over

their monastic centres. Like other ascetics they make it a point to attend the Kumbha-Meḷā in thousands. General elections to the Central executive body of the Bhek-Bārah-Pantha take place only once in twelve years when the Meḷā is at Hardwar, where the Bheka has its own monastery. The head of the organization is called Jogeśvara and is looked upon as the chief of the Nāthapanthis. In spite of the organization, it is quite clear to us that the Nāthapanthis have not shown the slightest appreciation of modern conditions, have not modified their way of living, much less have they taken up any educational and spiritualizing activity for their own order. For the public at large they have continued to offer their services through their old practice of offering food to any one that should happen to come to their monastery at meal-time. They have not taken up any social activity of the kind many other ascetic orders of our country have done. One centre has just awakened and begun an activity which is in the traditional line. The monastic centre at Banaras with its 'Yogapracāriṇī-Sabhā' has made a bid to spread the knowledge and practice of Yoga not only among Nāthapanthis but among lay people as well. There has cropped up amongst them a more than ordinary individual. We refer to Mahanta Digvijaynātha who, be it noted, does not call himself Pir. He was the secretary of the All-India Hindu Mahāsabhā and contested the recent General Election to the Indian Parliament from his home-province and failed.

Reformist Samnyasis

Rigid rules based on birth even more than on individual affiliation have been a characteristic of Hindu society. Most important of them have been those based on caste. Samnyāsa or asceticism was theoretically possible only for the members of the first three castes and that too only for the males. We do not know since when females came to be regularly admitted to ascetic orders. We have already noted ancient examples of female ascetics. And we have shown there that they must be looked upon as individual instances. In modern times we have reason to believe that outside the Kāpālika sect of Śaiva ascetics asceticism with monastic life for females must have been possible from before the seventeenth century. We know that the Kāpālikas had female ascetics. As a matter of fact they were a necessary adjunct to sectarian practice. According to tradition one of the ascetic disciples of Gorakhnātha was queen Maināvatī. Gorakhnātha had an even more important female disciple in the person of Vimalādevī. She founded the Āi-pantha which is one of the twelve sections of Gorakhnāthis. We do not know for certain that Jnāneśvara's equally famous sister Muktābāi was actually ordained an ascetic. It is clear from the Mahānubhāva literature of Maharashtra, written between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries A.D., that there were a number of female ascetics as clean-shaven as the male ones.[1] This reform of the old tradition which threw open monasticism for females is thus definitely pre-Mogul.

Earlier we have noted that one of the kingly duties that Rāma had to carry out was to cut off the head of a Śūdra, who was practi-

sing austerities to which he had no right. The Nāgā ascetics of the Dasanāmis, as we have shown, have been drawn more or less from the Śūdra caste. We have further established that their recruitment and organization must have begun about the middle of the 16th century. According to the traditional history of the 'ākhāḍā's Śūdras might have been ordained since even before Śankarācārya's time.

The reformist tendency in the ordination of females and Śūdras in the order of Śaiva asceticism is thus ancient. From one point of view, therefore, our separate treatment of some reformist orders among Śaiva Samnyāsis may be objected to. It may also be pointed out that Paramahamsa ascetics have always been above all rules. We have separated out the two classes of Śaiva Samnyāsis known as Udāsis and Nirmalas as reformists not simply because they do not attach any importance to rules about admitting Śūdras and females to asceticism but also because, originally at least, they were believed to be open to Muslims. Like the Kabīrapantha and Dādupantha among Vaishnavas, the Udāsis and Nirmalas were in origin a reaction of synthesis to the impact of Islam. Though they were not opposed to idol-worship root and branch, yet the impor tance they gave to 'Grantha Saheb' is not only a direct testimony to their Nānakśāhi affiliation but also a clear reflection of the imitation of the Islamic Koran. The selection of the combination of five Hindu deities, namely Śiva, Vishnu, Sun, Goddess Durgā and Gaṇapati, by the Udāsis also stamp them as reformists. It was an attempt to bypass bickerings and strifes over particular deities Śiva, Vishnu, etc. The Nirmalas are not so reformist as regards their membership. They say that they admit only members of the first three castes. In their prayers, however, they announce that the Purāṇa and the Koran are one, and emphasize the identity of Rāma and Rahim. As regards their attitude to Nānak and the 'Grantha Saheb', they are a step or two further than the Udāsis. So much is this the case that Wilson, who classes them as Nānakśāhis,

regards them as closer adherents to the doctrines of the founder, Nānak. In their revivalist aspect, too, they have gone further than the Udāsis. As we shall see they have, like the Udāsis, only two sections among them, one the Nāgā and the other the Paramahamsa. Both the sections are much more individualistic and given to wandering than to living in congregation in monastic centres. In their practice, too, instead of regular divine service they revel in speculative meditation of Nānak, Kabīr and such other unitarian teachers. [2]

The Udāsi class of ascetics is not only reformist but even revivalist. All the Śaiva ascetics so far dealt with are known as Smārtas, that is, following the Smṛti tradition. The Udāsis, on the other hand, call themselves Śrautas, the followers of Śruti. They point out that as Śrautas they worship the 'Pancāyatana', combination of five deities, whereas the Smārtas worship Śiva. In their zeal to establish their priority over Śaiva Samnyāsis they go even to the extent of stating that the Smārta ascetics, who are Śaivas, are designated Samnyāsis, while as Śrautas they themselves are called Udāsis. As if to concretize their claim to be known as Śrautas they have named their monastic centre at Vrindāvan Śrauta-Muni-Āśrama, 'the Hermitage of Śrauta Ascetics.' To differentiate themselves from other Samnyāsis, their literature makes the rather curious statement that begging for alms and putting on ochre-coloured garments are the Udāsi's speciality as opposed to the staff-carrying of the Smārta Samnyāsis. Of course, it is true that the Udāsis do not carry a staff. But as we have pointed out, only the Brahmin Samnyāsis of the four among the ten Dasanāmi orders carry the staff.

The philosophy of the Udāsi ascetics is the same monistic Vedānta as that of the Dasanāmis. Whenever there is any quarrel with the Vaishnava ascetics, they are always to be found on the side of the Śaiva sadhus. They use the sacred ash and their sect-mark on the forehead is 'tripuṇḍra', or three horizontal lines, in the fashion of the Dasanāmis. Their 'kamaṇḍalu', water-pot, is also similar in

shape to that of the Dasanāmis.

The four sections of the Udāsis are significantly termed Dhunis. Dhuni, as we know, is the smouldering fire characteristic of the Nāthapanthis. Even more important as evidence of the Udāsi affiliation with Śaiva ascetics is the statement of the Udāsis themselves that in their monastic centre at Kabul, which was established by Śrīcandra, the smouldering fire (dhuni), which was started by him in the sixteenth century A.D., still continues to burn.

The significance of the term Udāsi is shrouded in mystery. Etymologically it means one who is indifferent. As such the term can be applied to all ascetics, at least to such of them as are advanced in their asceticism. However it is actually never so applied. The Dasanāmi and other Samnyāsis allege that the founder of the sect, Śrīcandra, who was one of the sons of Nānak, became 'udāsīna', dejected, as he could not succeed to the preceptorial throne of his father. Followers of Śrīcandra, the Dasanāmis contend, naturally came to be known as Udāsins or Udāsis. It does not require a sectarian to detect weaknesses in this theory. At the same time not only we but even the sectarian Udāsis themselves are hard put to it to provide a rational explanation of the term. All agree that Śrīcandra was the historical founder of this class of ascetics. The sectarians contend that he was only the reorganizer. The alternative appellation of the Udāsis is Nānak-putras, sons of Nānak.[3] Śrīcandra, the historical founder, was born to Nānak in the year A.D. 1494. The alternative appellation enshrines the memory of the historical foundation of the Udāsi sect by Śrīcandra, the son of Nānak. Traditionally the sect is traced from the absolute and abstract Om, and, through the denominational Īśvara and through a number of intermediaries, we are introduced to the seventy-third preceptor Srīcandra. His preceptor was Avināśa. According to another list, the preceptorial succession begins with Sanaka. The first five preceptors being Sanaka,

Sanandana, Sanātana, Sanatkumāra and Nārada, the famous and immortal five Brahmacāris of ancient fame.

The initiation of a Udāsi is a fairly simple affair. It principally consists in the disciple sipping some water, in which his preceptor's feet have been washed and to which a little sugar has been added. The preceptor then imparts to him the sacred formulas. The disciple is now given a new name. There are two varieties of ascetics and they are ordained as such at the initiation. If a novitiate is ordained a Nāgā or a naked ascetic, he is given a name which ends in Dāsa or Śaraṇa, suffixes which are otherwise peculiar to the Vaishnava Bairāgis. If the initiation is for the Paramahamsa variety, the disciple receives a name which ends in Ānanda. It is alleged that formerly even the names of Paramahamsas ended in Dāsa.

The Paramahamsa puts on a full garment of ochre-coloured cloth. It is reported that formerly the colour of the cloth used to be white. There is a general opinion outside the Udāsi sect, in the matter of both the names of the Paramahamsas and the colour of their garment, that their contemporary practices have been influenced by the example of Swami Vivekānanda. If the novitiate is a Nāgā, he dresses himself only in a strip of cloth for the privities, and its colour may be red, white or black. The naked body is of course besmeared with ashes, which is so much honoured among the Udāsis that commonly one swears by a ball of these sacred ashes. The Nāgā keeps his hair long which he adorns or strengthens with the addition of black wool cord, called Śaili, received by him at the time of his initiation. It is a Nāgā's privilege to use a cap. It is given to him at the time of initiation. The Paramahamsa is clean-shaven. Both the classes use Rudrāksha necklace-rosary. But there is no strict rule about it. The Nāgās may enter upon bodily penance; but the Paramahamsas never.

Female ascetics are to be rarely met with. When one Udāsi meets another, the mutual greeting is formed by 'Om Namo Brah-

maṇe', Om ! bow to Brahman.

Udāsis observe most of the Hindu fasts and feasts and in addition celebrate with particular eclat the birth anniversary of Śrīcandra, which falls on the ninth of the bright half of Bhādrapada, and also the day on which he was ordained.

The Udāsis have, or rather had, their most famous centre at Sukkur in Sindh known as the Sadhubelā. They have their 'sthāna', place, at Banaras which is also important. The sect and its ascetics were mostly confined to what was old Punjab and Sindh. Between Banaras and Punjab they are met with only sporadically. East of Banaras in western Bihar a sub-section known after Bhaktagir has a few centres of not much vitality. It is very surprising that at Trimbak-Nasik only the Nāgā section has its ākhāḍā; but there is no regular centre of the Paramahamsas. Dr. Chapekar found the ākhāḍā a very poor thing, having at the time of his visit only two members. It is only at the 'Kumbha' assemblage, once in twelve years, that the centre becomes a lively place. Even at Ujjain, the state of affairs was not much different, though the habitation of the ākhāḍā at this place is a very large building. The dispersal of Sindhi population that took place during the last five years has provided Ujjain with a centre of Udāsi Paramahamsas. It is a painful commentary on the passionlessness and equanimity of the Udāsi Nāgās that when Paramahamsas from Sindh arrived at Ujjain they could not settle down at the ākhāḍā of the Nāgā Udāsis. This is all the more saddening and ironical because the Udāsi Paramahamsas have a magnificent centre at Vrindāvan, wellknown for its profuse hospitality, offered even in the absence of the head.

The Udāsi centres at Banaras, Vrindāvan and Hardwar are wellknown for the Pāṭhaśālas they conduct. At these centres regular lectures on religious topics and the reading of the Purāṇas go on throughout the year. A number of learned ascetics are always to be found pouring over 'pothi's, and some of them even writing on

religious topics. As we are writing, we have before us a well-got-up book in Hindi, running into about a thousand pages, interspersed with fine Sanskrit quotations, giving an excellent idea of the fundamentals of Hindu religion, followed by a rather unbalanced account of sectarian saints, which strains our imagination too much and offends our reason not a little. It was brought out by Śrīmat Swāmi Sutīkṣṇa Muni Udāsin at Sadhubelā twelve years ago. Unfortunately the exaggerated sectarian account seems to be paralleled by a partiality among the ascetics for rather long and high sounding prefixes and suffixes in their zeal for establishing their Vedic affiliation and their Śrauta tradition. Udāsi writers have not only distorted or misinterpreted some passages from ancient texts but also have asserted the existence of works that have never been mentioned anywhere. For example, to establish their prestige they needed a Bhāshya on *Brahmasūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa like that of Śankarācārya. They have asserted that Śrīcandra wrote a Bhāshya on it. When requested for a copy they said that it was not printed. When further requested for information about the manuscripts, the latter were all conveniently declared to have been lost in Western Pakistan!

The other class of reformist ascetics are the Nirmalas. If the Udāsi has appropriated to himself in his sect-name the general characteristic of an ascetic, namely indifference, the Nirmalas, in theirs, have fixed on another specific aspect. Nirmalas are those that are devoid of impurity, as the etymological meaning of the word Nirmalas shows. It redounds to the credit of the Nirmalas that other ascetics do not violently object to this appropriation. That does not mean that either this interpretation of the appellation is unanimously agreed or that other ascetics have nothing to say which is even slightly derogatory to the origin of the sect. We shall not enter into alternative explanations as they appear to us rather whimsical.

According to one account of the origin the historical founder

of the Nirmalas was Guru Govindsingh, the sixth in descent from Nānak. It states that the first batch of his disciples was composed of non-Brahmins, whom Govindsingh desired to be proficient in Sanskrit. Govindsingh sent them to Banaras for that purpose. But the Banaras pundits declined to teach Sanskrit to non-Brahmins. Govindsingh took upon himself the task, and by making them proficient in Sanskrit demonstrated their freedom from impurity. They came to be known as Nirmala, free from impurity. The Nirmalas themselves are not very happy over their origin. It is a healthy sign that they do not care to claim origin from the Deity nor even from one of the great immortal Brahmacāris of ancient fame. They are content with claiming Nānak himself as their founder. For evidence they point to the word Nirmala occurring here and there in Nānak's sayings and writings. They further disown the story of the Banaras pundits having declined to teach the disciples of Govindsingh. They contend that it was a Punjabi pundit who had declined to do so and that they were afterwards taught Sanskrit by Banaras pundits. We need not enter into the romantic but rather irrelevant account of a famous widowed beauty Anūpakaur, her passion for Govindsingh and Govindsingh's coming out of the ordeal undefiled, though sometimes the origin of their name is traced to this feat of Govindsingh in having escaped unsullied.

To initiate a disciple, a candidate is given to sip a little water mixed with sugar in an iron vessel. The rite is called Amṛtaprāśana, drinking of nectar. After the water is mixed with sugar, five ascetics one after another repeat the whole of the Grantha Saheb, the Book of the Sikhs, over it. This sanctified water is then called 'amṛta', nectar. The novitiate before his drinking of the nectar is known as Sahajadhāri. After the drink, he is dubbed a Singa. Most Nirmalas have their names ending in Singa. But some of them drop Singa and insert Muni or even Hari. At Ujjain Dr. Chapekar came upon one of those wonderful solitary ascetics, who are almost a peculiarity of this sect, who styled himself Trailokya Hari, 'Hari

of the Three Worlds'. Most of them grow their hair long. Most of them wear an ochre-coloured garment, while some stick to white garment, and that even at the time of the Kumbha assemblage.

They have but few female ascetics among them. Their esoteric formula is 'Om Satnām', 'Om Truth-Name', and their mutual greeting is 'Vāha Guru', 'Hail Guru'.

A section of the ascetics wander about during the eight clear months. They have their centres, both 'sthāna's as well as 'ākhāḍā's. At Hardwar they have both these institutions on a fairly large scale. At Prayag and at Hardwar their centres conduct Pāṭhaśālās. The stationary ākhāḍā is known as Pancāyati Ākhāḍā. The management of such an ākhāḍā, wherever it may be, is entrusted to Śri Mahanta of the Hardwar ākhāḍā. All Nirmalas are enjoined to stop at their centres during the four months of the monsoon. During the remaining eight months too most of them are found stationary. And it is but natural that they should be so, because they are meticulous about their daily observances and are particularly known for their advanced studies. A small number of them, however, is given to wandering. These are organized into an 'ākhāḍā' known as the Ramata Ākhāḍā. The Pancāyati ākhāḍā was organized in 1861.

When the ascetics are resident either at their sthānas or their ākhāḍās, they spend the largest part of their time in muttering prayers and reading serious Vedānta literature. Very few of them take to bodily penance or even to Yogic practices. Though they have never claimed any Bhāshyakāra amongst them, their dependence on and implicit faith in *Brahmasūtra* is perhaps the strongest among ascetic sects. They follow Śankara's monistic Vedānta through the Grantha Saheb, which they worship as their tutelary deity. Unlike the Sikhs they are prepared to offer worship to a number of Hindu deities in addition. To their tutelary deity daily worship is offered, on which occasion all the inmates attend for a communal prayer. One of their sub-sections known as Bihar

Vrindāvani sect has, at its centre at Ayodhya, a regular temple of Rāma.

The Nirmalas celebrate common Hindu festivals like Dasarā. Divāli, etc. Samkrānti is considered an important festival. Guruvāṇi, the Grantha Saheb, is read on that day and Karaha-prasada distributed to the audience. Fasts are observed on the 15th of the bright half of each month and the 11th of each fortnight. Janmāṣṭamī, the birth anniversary of Sri Krishna, and Śivarātri are also observed as fasts.

The Nirmalas range themselves with the Śaiva or the Advaita Samnyāsis in their fights against Bairāgis. The Pancāyati Ākhāḍā of this sect carries their banner known as the Dharmadhvaja.

Here also belongs that small band of ascetics, particularly to be met with in Malwa and Uttara Pradesh, which is popularly known as Kabīr Paramahamsas. They are otherwise known as Hamsa Kabīr. They put on ochre-coloured garments. Great many of them are recruited from the untouchable classes. The monastic centre of such ascetics at Hardwar is known among other ascetics and the lay Hindus as 'Cauthā Pauḍā', fourth step. Their connection with Kabīrpanth is not only very tenuous but even dubious. They insist on Jñānamārga, path of knowledge, and practise Yoga to that end. They are known to be given to austerities and penances like Cāndrāyaṇa vow, and some of them are said to have died in the pursuit of the fulfilment of their vows. Others, we are informed, are to be found who keep in the super-conscious state of Samādhi for as long as a month. They admit straightway to their ranks any person desirous of being ordained an ascetic irrespective of his religion, caste or previous ascetic affiliation. They repeat the Gāyatrī 'mantra'. They do not practise idol-worship nor do they keep fasts. The only two festivals they observe are Vasanta Pancamī and Guru Paurṇimā. When their Sadhus meet they greet one another with the formula 'Om Hari, Om Tat Sat'. Though associating themselves with Kabīr by prefixing the

word Kabīr to their group appellation, in the Kumbha assemblage they invariably place themselves by the side of Śaiva Samnyāsis.

Bairagis or Vaishnava Sadhus

THE ascetics, about whom we have written so far and whom we have generally designated as Śaiva ascetics, are, as we have stated, commonly known as Samnyāsis. This appellation is peculiar to them though etymologically it can be applied to all ascetics within the Hindu fold. Their designation as 'māyāvādi's current among their Vaishnava confreres stresses their underlying unity of philosophic viewpoint. That viewpoint is the monistic Vedānta comprehensively explained in Śankarācārya's *Bhāṣya* on *Brahmasūtra*. As we have seen, their sect-mark on the forehead is mostly formed of sacred ashes and is in general of the same common form and shape, having very insignificant variations among a few small groups.

With the Vaishnava ascetics we enter almost a different world. As the name 'Catuḥ-sampradāya' prevalent among them indicates, there are at least four important philosophic viewpoints, more or less violently differing from one another. Added to these differences are those about tutelary deity. Though the underlying unity is provided on the theological plane by their recognition of some form of Vishnu, yet in daily worship, his different aspects recognized as tutelary deities create significant differences. The followers of Rāmānuja worship Vishnu in his aspect of lying on Śeṣa and attended by Śrī, Bhū and Līlā. He is an imaginary and ideal type fundamentally different from Sītā-Rāma or Rāma with Sītā, whose life and doings are described in *Rāmāyaṇa*, and who is the tutelary deity of the followers of Rāmānanda. And Rāmānanda and his followers themselves are in point of philosophy the followers of Rāmānuja. As a matter of fact, Rāmānandis, or Rāmāvats as they are called, have no 'Bhāṣya' of their own on *Brahma-*

sūtra. Nimbārki or Nimāvat ascetics, whose philosophical school is based on the combined principle of duality and non-duality, are in a philosophical way not only distinct from the Rāmānuja Rāmānandis, but also from Vishnuswāmi-Vallabhācārya ascetics. But the tutelary deity of the Nimbārkis, Vishnuswāmis and Vallabhācāris is Krishna with Rādhā. Krishna's exploits have been described partially in *Mahābhārata*, in *Harivamśa* and more fully in *Vishnu Purāṇa*. His dalliance with cowherdesses is mentioned in *Bhāgāvata Purāṇa*.[1] In a later work, *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, Rādhā is declared to have come out of the left part of Krishna's body and is associated with him in his amorous sports. In another connection, the same Purāṇa states that Rādhā was the wife of a cowherd by name Rāpaṇa or Rāyaṇa.[2] The Mādhva Gauḍiya Caitanyaites, too,worship the same tutelary deity. The Nimbārkis and the Caitanyaites agree broadly in their philosophical outlook. It must be noted that the original sectarian affiliation of Caitanyaites, as their full name indicates, was Mādhva. Nimbārka is one of the great 'Bhāṣyakāra's whose work *Vedānta-Pārijāta-Saurabha* is a short commentary on *Brahmasūtra*, expounding the monistic-pluralistic theory of Vedānta. For the Caitanyaites, a 'Bhāṣya' on *Brahmasūtra* named *Govindabhāshya* by Baladeva Vidyābhūshaṇa was provided towards the end of the sixteenth century. Vishnuswāmi-Vallabhācāris are rigid monists and they have their own Bhāshya written by Vallabhācārya about the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Madhvaites, for whom Madhva's own Bhāshya, written about the middle of the thirteenth century, provides the philosophical viewpoint, which is dualist, generally worship any form of Vishnu as well as the combination of five deities.

The Bairāgis are marked off from the Samnyāsis by their white garment and are consequently known as Sīta-pādris. In their dress they do not differ among themselves. Another feature common to all their sects marks them out from the Samnyāsis. They are not clean-shaven; but some of them keep the hair matted like the

Samnyāsis. Their 'tilak'-mark on the forehead is another feature that distinguishes them from the Samnyāsis. The material that is used for making it is never the sacred ashes, which is favourite with the Samnyāsis. Its shape and design too are peculiar to them. Its basic pattern is formed by three vertical lines as contrasted with the horizontal lines of the 'tilak'-mark of the Samnyāsis. It is generally known as 'Ūrdhva-puṇḍra' or sometimes as 'Triphala'. Among themselves, however, the various sects of the Bairāgis differ both as regards the material used for the 'tilak'-mark as well as the details of the pattern. And it is not at all difficult to name the particular sect of a Bairāgi from his 'tilak'-mark.

Vaishnava asceticism is positively later than Śaiva asceticism. The ascetic schools that flourished before Śankarācārya, whether they were the Kāpālikas or not, were all Śaivites, though some texts in *Mahābhārata* and a passage in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* imply Vaishnava ascetics.[3] It is not known that even Rāmānuja, who flourished during the eleventh century A.D., founded an ascetic sect. He himself was the disciple of one Yāmunācārya otherwise known as Yāmunamuni. Yāmunamuni's preceptor was one Rāmamiśra, whose apostolic predecessor was Nāthamuni, the grandfather of Yāmunācārya.[4] Beyond Nāthamuni, the preceptorial line is not known. From the ending 'muni' in the names of these Ācāryas we may conclude that they were ascetics. There were before them in the Tamil land Vaishnava devotees who were known as Alvars. R. G. Bhandarkar [5] placed the earliest Alvars sometime before the fifth or the sixth century A. D. According to the traditional list, there are twelve of them. The names of the earliest three of them end in 'yogin'. Whether the Alvars were all of them ascetics cannot be definitely ascertained. We think that on the whole Vaishnava asceticism as a regular practice cannot be dated earlier than the ninth century A.D. It is post-Śankarācārya.

In point of time, Rāmānuja is the earliest 'Ācārya' among the four 'sampradāyas' of the Vaishnavas. And it would have been

proper to begin an account of Catuḥ-sampradāyi Bairāgis with Rāmānuja ascetics. But not many of them are known, and the few that exist are confined to their temple-monasteries in the South. The report of Kumbha-Meḷā at Ujjain in 1932 does not list Rāmānuji ascetics as having taken part in the procession. The Rāmānandi ascetics, Rāmāvats as they are called, are sometimes treated as a section of Rāmānujis because they have no 'Bhāshya' of their own on *Brahmasūtra*, at least not one which is considered authentic. Rāmānanda was also in the discipleship of Rāmānuja. We however find that not only do the Rāmāvats form the majority of all the 'Bairāgi's taken together but they have also been the most militant and important order of Vaishnava ascetics. We therefore treat them as a distinct order. In the first historically known gathering of the 'Catuḥ-sampradāyi's that took place at the beginning of the eighteenth century near Jaipur and considered the ways and means to combat the aggressiveness of the Śaiva ascetics, it was the Nimbārki ascetic Vrindāvanadeva who was chosen to preside over its deliberations. Rāmānanda, the founder of the order, was born in 1300 A.D.[6] He was thus junior not only to Madhva but also to Nimbārka by over a century.

The first order among Catuḥ-sampradāyi Bairāgis that we shall start with is the one founded by Nimbārka. Though there is difference of opinion about the date of Nimbārka, yet the one stated by R. G. Bhandarkar, A. D. 1162, as the year of his death commands by far the greatest approval. S. K. De[7], who also opines that the date of Nimbārka cannot be fixed with certainty, looks upon him as so contemporaneous with Jayadeva, the author of *Gītagovinda*, that he is not prepared to admit the possibility of the former having influenced the latter. Nimbārka is only the historical founder of the sect. As with many other sects the traditional founder is God Vishnu himself incarnate as 'Hamsa', swan. Hamsa-Vishnu's disciple was Sanaka or Sanātana, the traditional eternal 'brahmacāri's. The order, therefore, is alternatively called Sanakādi or Sanātana. The sect is also called Sudarśana, as Nimbārka is

believed to be an incarnation of 'sudarśana', the discus of Vishnu. Sectarians believe that Nimbārka was the disciple of Nārada who himself was the disciple of Sanaka. The more usual appellation of these Bairāgis is Nimāvats. As in the sect of Vishnuswāmi-Vallabhācāris, one of the later disciples named Harivyāsa made such a mark by his writings and his organizing capacity that the Nimbārki Bairāgis thereafter came to be known as Harivyāsis.

Like his date many other important matters about Nimbārka's life are a matter of discussion and dispute. While some say that he was a Telugu Brahmin, others say that he belonged to Paiṭhan. Though it was not impossible for a person of Paiṭhan to be of Telugu lineage in those times, yet the place was already famous as a centre of Maharashtrian pundits. Some identify him with the famous mathematician Bhāskarācārya. This tradition is preserved at Dhruvakṣetra near Mathurā, where there is a strong monastic centre of this order.[8] All agree, however, that he moved to Mathurā–Vrindāvan. Nimbārka was a great writer but he always wrote in Sanskrit. It was Śrī Bhaṭṭa, 31st in the apostolic succession, who wrote in Hindi. Though Nimbārka's *Vedānta–Pārijāta–Saurabha*, which is a commentary on *Brahmasūtra*, is considered to be a sort of a 'Bhāshya,' yet his disciples were evidently not happy about it. And the 30th in the list, Keśava Kāśmirin by name, wrote a regular 'Bhāshya.'[9] He also wrote a 'Bhāshya' on *Bhagavadgītā*. It is remarkable how the sectarians felt the need of a Sanskrit commentary on *Bhagavadgītā*, which was not satisfied till the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Keśava Kāśmirin flourished. It is a pregnant commentary on the linguistic and cultural history of India, that, within fifty years of this event, the great apostolic successor Harivyāsadeva, 32nd in the list, turned his entire attention to promulgating the doctrines and observances of this sect in Hindi (Brij dialect).

Though Nimbārka might not have influenced Jayadeva, it was he who brought Rādhā with Krishna to the fore-front as the tutelary

deity. Rādhā, in this cult is treated as Krishna's wife and not as his mistress. At present, the sectarian followers are to be met with mostly in Rajasthan, Uttar-Pradesh, Nepal and Bengal. Their chief centre is at Parashuramapuri, alias Salemabad, in Rajasthan. Another centre, only next in importance to Salemabad, lies at the east end at Vardhaman, forty miles to the west of Calcutta in Bengal.

Like other Vaishnava Bairāgis Nimāvats put on white garment. Their names end in Dāsa or Śaraṇa, and their 'tilak'-mark consists of two white vertical lines with a black dot in the centre. Their necklace-rosary consists of two strands of Tulasi (sacred basil or Ocymum Sanctum) beads. The two strands are in the name of Rādhā and Krishna. The necklace must lie close to the neck. The Sādhus greet one another with the words 'Jaya Sarveśvara', 'Daṇḍavat', or 'Rādhesyāma'.

They observe the common Hindu fasts like 'Ekādaśi' and Śivarātri and usual festivals like the Holi and Divāli, and more specifically celebrate the birth-days of important personages in their preceptorial line. Rādhāṣṭamī, coming on the 8th of the bright half of 'Bhādrapad', is observed on a particularly grand scale. The Nimbārkis are grouped into nine Dwārās. The word Dwārā is commonly used among Vaishnava sects to denote a branch, each one being named after its founder, a noted Sādhu of the sect,

The chief monastic centre of this sect at Vrindavan is popularly known as Śrījīkī Baḍī Kunja, 'Great Garden of Śrī'. Dr. Chapekar in his itinerary met the 'mahant' of this place. It is noteworthy that, though the great 'mahanta's among the Catuh-sampradāyis after ending their names with Dāsa or Śaraṇa, implying self-subordination, suffix the title 'Mahārāja', great king, this gentleman is not so addressed. He is a great Sanskrit scholar proficient in two or three different Śāstras. He is called Bṛjavallabhaśaraṇa. Being the manager of the centre, which is under the

direct control of the Parashuramapuri 'maṭha', he is commonly addressed as Adhikāriji. He was engaged in the task of determining the date of Nimbārka, which has been a bone of contention for all. He has a big library in his possession containing a large number of manuscripts. Not only learned 'śāstri's of the Nimbārki Pāṭhaśālā nearby but also other pundits from Vrindavan and far off places were seen visiting him for consultation. The Nimbārki Pāṭhaśālā, or College as we may call it, is situated about a mile away from this centre. It was started about 1933. The building is capable of housing about a hundred students. At the time of the visit it was stated that there were about thirty-five students residing there during the year. Actually about fifteen students were seen. The others had gone back to their homes for vacation. It is a noteworthy feature of this Nimbārki Pāṭhāśālā that non-Nimbārki students are freely admitted to the courses of instruction. To the usual curriculum of non-sectarian and sectarian Sanskrit literature is now added a little English and some smattering of other subjects as laid down by the Educational Department of the Uttar Pradesh.

Here we come across a fresh example of the effects of the reformist leaven that has been acting in the Vaishnava fold since Rāmānuja's days. Pundit Kiśordāsa of Vrindāvan, who is about eighty years old, presented a Tulasi-bead-rosary to some members of an untouchable class a few years ago and thereby smoothened the course of religious practices undertaken by some of them against the wishes of their neighbours.

Almost all Vaishnava sects except that of Vishnuswāmi started as philosophico-religious doctrines propounded by their first founders, for the enlightenment of their lay followers. They were not at the very outset designed for ascetics. Nor in all cases were even the heads of the principal centres required to be ascetics. The case of Vishnuswāmi-Vallabhacāri sect, however, is unique. Vishnuswāmi, the promulgator, who was himself an

ascetic, started his sect known as the Rudra Sampradāya as that of ascetics, with a philosophy which in its later and fully expounded form is known as 'Śuddhādvaita', Pure Monism. Vishnuswāmi is known to have been the son of one Deveśvara who was the royal priest of a Pandya king. R. G. Bhandarkar[10], following the tradition of Nābhāji's *Bhaktamālā*, places him in the middle of the thirteenth century.

The succession given by Nābhāji records as his disciples the famous Maharastrian saints Jnānadeva and Nāmdeva. Nāmadeva is represented as having been followed by one Trilocana and the latter by the famous Vallabha. Kshitimohan Sen[11] in his *Mediaeval Mysticism of India* has recorded a tradition current at the Nāmadevi centre of the village Ghoman in Batala, Punjab, which makes Vishnuswāmi the disciple of Nāmadeva. In that tradition Nāmadeva is represented as having been born in A. D. 1363 and as having met Pherozshah Tuklugh and as having received a grant of free land from Shah Alam, the last Sayyad King of Delhi. Nāmdeva is believed to have died in that 'maṭha' in A. D. 1464. Sen places Vishnuswāmi in the fifteenth century, but rightly ascribes to him the founding of Rudra Sampradāya. He makes Lakṣmaṇabhaṭṭa, the father of Vallabha, 'a descendant of Vishnuswāmi'. In his opinion Lakṣmaṇabhaṭṭa migrated to northern India, and that is how Vallabha came to settle at Vrindāvan.

In this sect there are 4 Dwārās, one of which is named after Nāmadeva, who thus seems to have been the disciple of Vishnuswāmi and not vice-versa. Had it not been so, the sect would have been known after Nāmadeva, the Dwārā, as is common and natural, being known by the name of the disciple. Another Dwārā is named after Viṭṭhala, the deity of Pandharpur worshipped by Nāmadeva. This clearly shows Nāmadeva's influence.

In both accounts importance comes to be attached to Vallabha's work. Though sectarians assert that Vishnuswāmi wrote a 'Bhāshya' called *Sarvajna-sūkta*, yet the only Bhāshya extant as the

authoritative philosophy of the sect is the famous *Anubhāshya* of Vallabhācārya. Vallabhācārya was born in A. D. 1479 and died in A. D. 1531. He not only gave a 'Bhāshya' but turned an ascetic sect almost completely into one of householders. He himself was a married man with a large progeny. He had two sons and seven grandsons. Vallabhācāris celebrate festivals not only in Vallabha's honour but also in honour of his sons and grandsons. The extraordinary influence wielded by Vallabhācārya through his 'Puṣṭi-mārga', which propounds salvation only through the service of the 'guru', religious preceptor, has descended unabated through the line of the preceptors of the sect.[12]

The few Vishnuswāmi ascetics that are there—no female ascetic is known— can hardly be distinguished in appearance and in paraphernalia from the Nimbārkis. In the pattern of living, too, they resemble them most. The only monastic centres of importance that they have are at Vrindāvan and at Pali in Rajasthan.

Madhvācārya appears to have been a Tulu Brahmin. He was born in A.D. 1197 and left his material body in A.D. 1276. He was initiated into Samnyāsa by one Acyutaprekṣācārya, whose ascetic name was Purushottama Tīrtha. After his ordination Mādhva came to be known as Ānanda Tīrtha.[13] Though Ānanda Tīrtha thus belonged in origin to the Śankara school of philosophical thought, he carried on a ceaseless campaign against that school. He preached a philosophical outlook based on the Sānkhya system which is known as dualism. His sect is known as Brāhma Sampradāya. Its tutelary deity is Laxmī-Nārāyaṇa. The female consort is strictly treated as a deity and not so much as a consort of the principal deity. Though the tutelary deity is thus Vishnu, Mādhva's catholicity is apparent in his tolerant attitude. It is possible for his sectarian followers to install 'Pancāyatana', a combination of five gods, as their tutelary deity. Two of his immediate apostolic successors were 'Tīrtha's, a class of ascetics not possible in strict Vaishnava sects. S. K. De adds the further interesting

information that all the apostolic successors till today have called themselves Tīrthas.[14] The ascetic section of Mādhva sectarians is very limited in number and is almost wholly confined to South India. They are not represented even at the Kumbha assemblage. We have referred to them here because the Caitanyaite ascetics, a large number, well distributed all over North India, are always represented as Mādhva Gauḍiyas. They are thus regarded as a section of the Mādhvas. The reasons are not at all clear.

Doctrinally they differ from the Mādhvas. Their tutelary deity, their faith and their observances are all very different from those of the Mādhvas. Caitanya is said to have gone to Udipi, in South Kanara, the home of Madhva, and to have worshipped the idol of Krishna believed to have been installed by Madhva himself. He is said to have discoursed on Vaishnavism to the Madhvas of the place.[15] But this cannot explain the association of Madhva with Caitanyaites. It is clearly the semi-organizational motive of having a footing within the fold of the Catuḥ-sampradāyis that led the Caitanyaites to claim affiliation under the Mādhvas. This is the reason that was given by Vaishnava Bairāgis. We are not entirely convinced of the validity of it. If this was the only reason, the Caitanyaites had a much better claim to demand affiliation with the Nimbārkis. Not only is the tutelary deity of the two the same but their philosophical outlook is identical. The Caitanyaites did not produce a 'Bhāshya' on *Brahmasūtra* till Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa gave them one in the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

The Catuḥ-Sampradāyas are specifically mentioned in *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*. The Nimbārkis are mentioned therein and as Nimbarka had a 'Bhāshya', the Caitanyaites could have claimed it as their own and affiliated themselves to the Nimbārki sect. The Nimbārkis were already settled in Vrindāvan. There was also settled Vallabhācārya himself. It seems that it was the desire of Caitanyaites to keep themselves thoroughly distinct that

made them seek affiliation with a sect, whose monastic centres were far off, though dissimilar in doctrines and observances.

As we write this we have before us a letter from Bṛjavallabhaśaraṇji in which he says that originally the Caitanyaites and the Rādhāvallabhis were affiliated to the Nimbārki sect. It is only since the historical conference of the four sects, to which we have already referred, that these two sects started claiming affiliation with Mādhvas. This corroborates our viewpoint.

S. K. De[16] has pointed out the fact that the Mādhvas reject the erotic Rasapancādhyāya of *Śrimad-Bhāgavata*, which is an important text with Caitanyaites. In the early texts of the Caitanya Sampradāya, the works of Madhva are very rarely cited. Caitanya himself was introduced to the king of Puri as a Samnyāsi of the Bhāratī order. Tradition states that the preceptor who admitted Caitanya as an ascetic was Keśava Bhāratī of the Bhāratī order, while the one who introduced him to esoteric doctrines was Īśvara Puri of the Puri order. Rūpa Goswāmi, the first important disciple of Caitanya, refers to the 'Bhāshya' of Madhvācārya. Jīva Goswāmi, the great organizer of the Caitanyaite order, who was the brother's son of Rūpa, not only respectfully refers to Madhvācārya's Vaishnava ideas but also quotes with approval three of the later apostolic successors of Madhva. But, as De points out, they are never referred to as previous preceptors.

De[17] opines that it was Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa who distinctly and unequivocally claimed affiliation with the Mādhvas. The occasion was provided by the conference of Vaishnava ascetics that took place in the first quarter of the eighteenth century at Jaipur-Galata. De suggests that Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa found it necessary to declare his Mādhva affiliation in order to secure recognition as one of the Catuḥ-Sampradāyis. He observes: "The Bengal Vaishnavas, for some reason or other, thought it convenient to acknowledge themselves as Madhvas." He further informs his

readers that Jīva Goswāmi in the second generation of Caitanya discipleship declared that as *Bhāgavata Purāna* itself is Vyāsa's own commentary on *Brahmasūtrā* there was no need for the Caitanyaites to have any. We should have thought that with this attitude of Jīva Goswāmi, who was a Karnataka Brahmin settled in Bengal and who refers to Madhva's doctrines with respect, the proper inference about Mādhva affiliation of Caitanyaites should have been that either Jīva Goswāmi or his immediate successor had taken Mādhva affiliation in practice. Such a conclusion harmonizes with the fact that at the commencement of his Bhāshya aforementioned, and elsewhere too, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa describes the Mādhva apostolic succession.

The foregoing conclusion fits in properly with another piece of evidence. The most practical significance of sect–affiliation is observed at the Kumbha assemblage, where in the procession the Bairāgis have to take their place according to their proper order.

We do not know when the first Kumbha assemblage occurred. Wide-spread and repeated enquiries have failed to elicit any cogent information. The only response we got is a brochure called *Kumbhaparvaṇirṇayah* by Ramakrishnananda Giri. Anantaśāstri Phadake of Banaras, Professor of Sanskrit in Kaśī Sanskrit Mahāvidyālaya, was good enough to send it to us. It is propounded in the brochure, as is usual with such writings, that the Kumbha assemblage at Hardwar has been there from the very beginning and that it was perhaps resuscitated after a long lapse by Śankarācārya. Verses are quoted, purporting to be from the Purāṇas, without precise references being given, to show that the Kumbha assemblage is associated with the struggle between the Devas and the Daityas for the possession of the jar of nectar that had arisen out of the primeaval churning of the ocean. A verse is quoted as from *Skanda Purāṇa* describing the greatness and the sanctity of Hardwar. It makes reference to the special sanctity of Hardwar in the year when Jupiter is in the zodiacal sign of Kumbha, Acquarius. We have

failed to trace the verse in the printed text of *Skanda Purāṇa*. We have come to the conclusion that the 'Kumbha–Meḷā' came to be organized some time after the twelfth century.

It is recorded[18] that in 1398, Timur massacred a large number of devotees at Hardwar. Only on special occasions does Hardwar attract large number of 'devotees'. It was perhaps an occasion of the Kumbha–Meḷā. The latest occasion of such an assemblage at Hardwar was in 1950. It recurs at that place every twelve years. On this reckoning, the year 1398 happens to be a year for that assemblage at Hardwar. In the traditional account of Caitanya's life properly sifted by S. K. De, Caitanya is reported to have been present at the Kumbha–Meḷā at Prayāg in the year A. D. 1514.

The statement about four Sampradāyas occurring in *Bhaviṣya-Purāṇa* and the *Garga Samhitā* must be ascribed to a time before Vallabhācārya established himself at Vrindāvan. And it could not have been earlier than the year of Vishnuswāmi's death. As a matter of fact it must be some time after Vishnuswāmi's death that he could have been mentioned as a Sampradāya–starter. If the specific statement of the names of the four Sampradāyas had been made after Vallabhācārya, then we feel convinced that it would have been he who would have received the canonization as a Sampradāya–founder. He had not only the prestige of a Bhāshya-kāra but also had the halo of a great teacher and an organizer. He had succeeded almost within his lifetime in transforming an ascetic sect into one of house–holders. He had thus put his sect on a par with that of the Rāmānujis. It would have been impossible at that stage to ignore and supersede him.

An occasion for such a classification and fixation of recognized Vaishnava sects could have been best provided by a Kumbha assemblage. If this reasoning is correct, the first occasion of the Kumbha–Meḷā, about the middle of the fourteenth century must have necessitated the naming of the four recognized Vaishnava

sects. When, very soon after that, the Rāmānandis came on the scene, there was no difficulty for them because in those early days of their sectarian life all were agreed that they were only a branch of the Rāmānujis. And Rāmānuji ascetics being negligible it was easy for the Rāmānandis to get their due status without any occasion for inferiority complex. When, however, the Caitanyaites came on the scene later on, things could not be so easy for them unless they had explored a similar solution, which they found in their practical affiliation with the Mādhvas. The few Mādhva ascetics that there were, were confined to the South and they did not care to attend the Kumbha assemblage. The Caitanyaites by claiming Mādhva affiliation could secure status and prestige.

The Caitanyaites, though only one of the two branches of Mādhva ascetics - the Caitanyaites themselves as Gauḍiyas and the Rādhāvallabhis - are by far the largest and the most important group. Their house-holder section, too, which is quite large, acknowledges its Mādhva affiliation by calling its members Mādhva -Gauḍeśvaras. The Rādhāvallabhis on the other hand, who are a small sect, are divided. Their Rasika section, which is mainly composed of householders, does not accept any affiliation whatever and looks upon itself as a sect independent of and outside the four recognized sects.

Caitanya was born in A. D. 1485, was ordained an ascetic in A. D. 1510 and left his mortal body in A. D. 1533. He was a very remarkable person. Without almost writing anything he influenced a large number of people. His greatest human conquests were the two brothers Rūpa and Sanātana and their nephew Jīva. They were Karnatak Brahmins settled at Gaud in Bengal. They provided the theological, philosophical and emotional literature of the sect and organized its great centre at Vrindāvan. With them were associated one Gopālabhaṭṭa, a South Indian Brahmin, one Raghunāthabhaṭṭa and one Raghunāthadāsa, all disciples of Caitanya. These six Goswāmis, as they are called, founded and developed their

great centre at Vrindāvan.[19] Of them Gopālabhaṭṭa was definitely a householder and the most important local head. Anyway it is the lineal descendants of Gopālabhaṭṭa who, though householders, are the accredited leaders and the apostolic heads of the Vrindāvan Caitanyaites.[20] We would like our readers to remember that nearly half the population of Vrindāvan today consists of Caitanyaite followers.

The largest following of Caitanya doctrines among householders, however, occurs in Bengal, Assam and Orissa. All over this region it would not be untrue to say that Mahāprabhu Caitanya has taken the place of his own tutelary deity Rādhā–Krishna as the deity of his followers. Caitanya has dedicated to him not only the chief temples at Nadia and other places hallowed by his association but also at several other nook and corner places. And this is but natural. For Caitanya is treated as an incarnation not only of Krishna but of Rādhā and Krishna combined in one unity. It is in keeping with the deteriorative fissiparation, that has been going on in this sect and is demonstrated by the existence of more than a dozen sub-sections, some of which have doctrines and observances not very distinguishable from Śaiva Vāmacāris, that one Haridāsa the fifth or the sixth in Caitanya discipleship, has been deified and has temples dedicated to his worship.[21]

Caitanya as the incarnate combination of Rādhā and Krishna was a fair person, his fair complexion having been ascribed to the Rādhā part in him. He had a brother named Nityānanda, who was believed to have been initiated into Samnyāsa by Mādhava Puri. He was known as an Avadhūta ascetic for long, before he joined the new dispensation of Caitanya. De[22] concludes from this that Nityānanda, in all probability, was a Tāntric ascetic. Nityānanda was naturally regarded as the incarnation of Krishna's brother Balarāma. He too had a temple dedicated to him.[23] The third Prabhu of Caitanyaites is Advaitānanda. He is supposed to

be only a part-incarnation. He too is represented as having been a disciple of Mādhava Puri. Before he was ordained an ascetic his name was Kamalākṣa Bhaṭṭācārya. He came from Shantipur. His inclination towards intellectual Advaitism was worn down by the emotional Bhaktism of Caitanya.[24] He does not seem to have any temple dedicated to him.

Caitanya's nature was highly emotional and in his moments of absorption in 'Premabhakti' or loving Bhakti, he used to shower affection round about him. Himself engaged in devotional practice he used to get into such ecstatic trance that he lost all consciousness of the external world and his surroundings. It is in such ecstatic trances that his disciples have remembered him. And the available pictures of him show him in this super-conscious condition of ecstatic trance. It should be remembered that unlike his great predecessors, Śankarācārya, Madhvācārya and Jnāneśvara, Caitanya was twice married before he was ordained an ascetic.

As already stated, the philosophical doctrine of Caitanyaites or Mādhva Gauḍiyas is dualism—non-dualism. Their idea of salvation is that the devotee after death goes to the 'Goloka', where he gets the privilege of serving his tutelary deity Rādhā-Krishna for all time. The Mādhva Gauḍiyas look upon Rādhā as Krishna's mistress and not as his wife. Their insistence that it is only in the relation of a mistress that love in its supreme and exquisite form can be manifested and tasted, explains, to a large extent, the deteriorative fissiparation for which the Caitanyaite sect is so noted.

The sect formally does not recognize caste. Members of all castes–and it is suggested that even non–Hindus–can be admitted into the order. Yet, at the time of taking meals, more often than not, caste distinctions are observed. It is invariably declared that the cook is a Brahmin. In the Gauḍiya Mission centres, however, none of the caste distinctions are observed.

Mādhva Gauḍiya ascetics wear their 'Tulasi' necklace quite

close to the neck unlike the Mādhvas who wear it rather loose. It consists of three strands, the odd number three having been necessitated by the fact of having to guarantee that two strands at least shall always keep intact. The two strands have to represent Rādhā and Krishna. Most of the ascetics still continue to wear white garments. But some stray ascetics and a large number of those of the Gauḍiya Mission have begun to use ochre-coloured ones. It is suggested that this practice of the members of the Gauḍiya Mission is a reflection of the great influence that the Rāmakrishna Mission has been wielding during the last forty years. Their 'Tilak'-mark on the forehead consists of two white perpendicular lines, joined over the bridge of the nose, from which another white line continues down the ridge of the nose to its tip. They call themselves Tridaṇḍi Samnyāsis, and their male names end in Dāsa or Śaraṇa and female names in Dāsī.

They admit female ascetics who mostly live independently. Only rarely are they to be met with in male monastic centres.

There are more than twelve sub-sections among Mādhva Gauḍeśvaras based on slight doctrinal differences. Differences in actual practices are however significant. And some of the deviations are so great and so bad that the main body of the sectarians call them weeds. There are 64 organizational units, called Parivāras, which cover both the ascetic and the householder sectarians. The ascetics have two or three Dwārās of which Rādhāvallabhi is one.

All Mādhva Gauḍeśvara Bairāgis observe the four important Vaishnava anniversaries namely, Rāmanavamī, (the 9th of the bright half of Caitra), Nṛsimha-Jayantī (the 14th of the bright half of Vaiśākha) Janmāṣṭami (the 8th of the dark half of Śrāvana), and Vāmana-dvādaśī, (the 12th of the bright half of Bhādrapada). Their additional fast and festival is Caitanya's anniversary which falls on the 15th of the bright half of Phalguna. They observe the

elevenths of all the lunar fortnights as fasts. Though staunch Vaishnavas, they also observe the Śivarātrī fast.

The Mādhva Gauḍiya Bairāgis, like other ascetics, conduct Pāṭhaśālās and manage Gośālās. They also maintain free dispensaries. Quite a number of their Bairāgis are well-versed in the Indian system of medicine. Dr. Chapekar visited the free dispensary maintained by Pyāremohandāsa of Vrindavan, where the venerable Bairāgi was found attending to his patients almost ten hours of the day. An organization called Srī Viśva-Vaishnava Rājasabhā, latterly known as the Gauḍiya Mission, was started in A.D. 1886 through the combined efforts of Śrīmat Bhaktivinoda Thākur and his apostolic successor Vishnupāda Paramahamsa Śrīmat Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī, to carry out the work of spreading the doctrines of the sect, to inculcate spiritual life and to conduct educational and medical relief institutions. It has made good progress by now. Its principal head-quarters is the Śrī Gauḍiya Maṭha in Calcutta. It has seven branches in West Bengal, twelve branches in Orissa, three in Bihar, seven in U.P. and two in the Delhi-Punjab region. It has one branch at Madras and one at Bombay which are rather passive. Outside India it has one branch in London. In India west of Ujjain and South of the Narmada its activity is negligible. It counted among its members non-Hindu and European Sadhus. But on inquiry, we were told that there are none such to-day. Quite a number of ascetics of this sect are highly educated and take part in political activity. The famous Bon Mahārāj, who was a member of the Gauḍiya Mission, is an extraordinary type. He felt compelled to leave the mission in order to carry out political and social work according to his own ideas. His ideas are great. He has started with the organization of what he calls the Vaishnava University at Vrindāvan. It offers post-graduate courses in theological and philosophical disciplines.

The most important Vaishnava ascetic sect is that of the Rāmānandis, who are otherwise called Rāmāvats. Though they do

not like to be grouped with Rāmānujis, their philosophical basis, namely qualified dualism, is acknowledged to be that of the Śrī Sampradāya, the first and the oldest of the Vaishnava Sampradāyas.

Rāmānanda was born at Prayag in A.D. 1300. His original name was Rāmadatta. At a very early age he got himself initiated into Samnyāsa at the hands of Rāghavānanda. Rāghavānanda himself was the head of the Śrī-maṭha at Banaras. As tradition tells us Rāmānanda was made a Tridaṇḍī Samnyāsi and installed in his preceptorial post by Rāghavānanda himself. The preceptorial ascent is commonly traced to one Hariyānanda, evidently of Banaras. According to Rāmānandis the school begins with Rāma and the doctrine descends through Śītā and their devotee Hanumān through a succession of twenty-two preceptors to Hariyānanda. According to Rāmānuji tradition, Hariyānanda was himself the disciple of Rāmānuja's own disciple. R. G. Bhandarkar states that Rāmānanda had separated and founded a distinct school during the life-time of his preceptor.[25]

Rāmānanda made it his regular practice to accept disciples irrespective of their caste affiliation. Among his disciples of Śūdra and other castes twelve became very famous. His thirteenth famous disciple was a woman named Padmāvatī. All the twelve established branches which are traditionally recognized. But the female disciple has no branch assigned to her. These branches are known as Dwārās. There are in addition twenty-five other Dwārās. A Dwārā is known after its founder, and is called Gādi after the name of the place of its chief centre.

Prominent Gādis exist in Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Some of these, according to Rāmānandi accounts, are very old. A few of them claim a continuous functioning for five centuries. The centre at Pindori in Gurdaspur district of Punjab, for example, is recorded to have been founded by one Bhagawān who was born in A.D. 1449. According to tradition

Bhagawān lived for 174 years, and seems to have founded the centre sometime after 1572. He appears to have been a senior contemporary of another great Rāmānandi ascetic by name Śrī Krishnadāsa. Śrī Krishnadāsa is much better known by his pet name Pavahāri. Pavahāri is really the vernacular form of Payohāri, 'one living only on milk or perhaps only on water.' This Pavahāri, so tradition represents, was the disciple of Anantānandācārya, one of the first and principal twelve disciples of Rāmānanda. He settled at Jaipur and founded the centre at Galata, which stands on the eastern outskirts of the city, in A.D. 1504. Evidently he had moved from Banaras to Jaipur sometime earlier.

It is interesting to observe that the account eulogizing the triumphs of Pavahāri Śrī Krishnadāsa records the existence of an important centre of Śaiva ascetics at Jaipur, whose king had accepted the discipleship of one Tārānātha. Tārānātha is described as a Kāpālika Yogi. It seems he had one disciple Caturnātha. By Kāpālika is evidently meant Kānphāṭā.[26] Śrī Krishnadāsa seems to have been adept in Yogic practices, because he succeeded in impressing the Maharani of Jaipur by his performances against those of her Kānphāṭā preceptor Tārānātha. Sometime thereafter Tārānātha and his pupil Caturnātha left the place, leaving the field open to Śrī Krishnadāsa. Bhagawān the founder of Pindori Dhām seems to have met Śrī Krishnadāsa probably in the interval between the latter's arrival at Jaipur and his founding of the monastic centre. The mastery over Yoga ascribed to Śrī Krishnadāsa is surprising, if he were a Rāmānandi from the outset. Practice of Haṭhayoga among the Rāmānandis is more or less confined to only the Nāgā section amongst them. If Śrī Krishnadāsa has to be considered a Nāgā it would mean that the fighting section of the Rāmānandis was formed quite early in the career of the sect. But all available evidence goes to show that the Nāgā section of the Rāmanandis was not started till the seventeenth century. Perhaps the career of this eminent ascetic is but another illustration of the slow but steady process of the transplantation of the Śaiva sects, and especially of

the Nāthapanthis, by Vaishnava sects, more particularly by the Rāmānandis.

Another important centre of Rāmānandis founded about the middle of the sixteenth century is at Jhithada in Jodhpur region. It is about seven miles from Pali station. Its foundation is ascribed to Kubāji whose original name was Kevalrāma. One speciality of this centre is that it is regarded as the Gurudwāra of noblemen and Kshatriyas too. The Mahanta of the place used to receive from the Jodhpur state all the paraphernalia of a ruling prince when he used to go on his itinerary. Another peculiarity of this centre is that about twenty-five years back, the head of the centre built a temple in which he installed the statue of Kubāji Mahārāj. It has sixty-eight sub-centres distributed all over India, only two of them being either to the South of the Godavari or to the east of Ayodhya. The southern one is at Tirupati while the eastern one is at Bhagalpur.

More or less contemporaneous with the Galata Gadi comes the Rewasa Gadi situated about fifty miles to the north–west of Jaipur. It was founded by the second disciple of Pavahāri Śrī Krishnadāsa, the founder of Galata. It seems to be the parent or the head of twelve other 'dwārā's, centres.

The Rāmānandi centre at Ayodhya, which is called 'Baḍā Sthāna', Great Centre, is not a particularly old foundation, having come into existence not earlier than the second quarter of the eighteenth century. But it is very important; in a way much more important than any other Rāmānandi centre. It was founded by one Rāmaprasāda who took to Samnyāsa after marriage. It is this Rāmaprasāda who has given the Rāmānandi sect their Bhāshya styled *Jānakī-Bhāshya*. He also started a new style of 'Tilak'-mark known as Bindu Śrī, the 'bindu' representing Sītā's forehead-mark of red lead. The present occupant of the Gadi is Mahanta Raghuviraprasāda, the tenth head. One disciple of the previous head is at present resident at Ahmedabad. His name is Bhaga-

vatācārya. Dr. Chapekar met this learned gentleman. He conducts a Hindi journal by name *Tatvadarśi*. He has to his credit forty different works expounding the doctrines and practices of the Rāmānandi sect, about half of them in Sanskrit and the rest in Hindi. He is a progressive ascetic who, contrary to sectarian practice, wears an ochre-coloured garment and carries on an active propaganda against untouchability. He is a well-known orator in Hindi and is so pure in character that, contrary to sectarian doctrine, he is always known as Brahmacāri. In 1950 he was preparing to go to Africa on a religious mission.

It would seem that the centre Baḍā Sthāna itself in the sacred city of Ayodhya is agog with progressivism in the spirit of the times. The pontifical head of the place, Raghuviraprasāda, who is orthodox enough to have taken a good deal of trouble and pain to stop cow-slaughter in Ayodhya and near about which was restarted about 1935 after a lapse of a number of years, keeps a nicely dressed crop over his head. Wearing a 'dhoti' and a shirt he keeps his face clean-shaven. He is well-versed in Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu and English. He is such a forceful personality that his fellow ascetics do not bother much about his non-ascetic practices.

There is another important centre at Ayodhya which is known as Vidyākuṇḍa Sthāna. Its affiliation is with the Dwārā started by Anubhavānanda. We shall have occasion to write about an important development within the Catuḥ-Sampradāya that took place at the beginning of the eighteenth century. One Rāmānandi ascetic by name Bālānanda, who seems to have belonged to the Dwārā of Anubhavānanda, was entrusted with the task of organizing that development. The fourth in descent from Anubhavānanda is credited with the founding of Vidyākuṇḍa. Yet its name is not ascertainable before A.D. 1873. The Baḍi Chāvaṇī of Radhunāthadāsa of Ayodhya, which is a big centre of Rāmānandi Nāgās, is affiliated to this 'sthāna'. Ascetics owning allegiance to Baḍi Chāvaṇī are spread far and wide, even as far as Baluchistan.

It is interesting to note that one of its sub-centres established at Pandharpur in Maharashtra was later taken up by other ascetics.

We shall deal with only one more centre of the Rāmānandis because it happens to be the most modern amongst them. It is situated in Vaghanagari or Choraut in Muzaffarpur district of the Uttar Pradesh. It was started early, but was soon eclipsed by the centre at Matihani in Nepal. In 1910, it asserted its independence and brought under its sway the southern and eastern centres of Rāmānandis. One of them was at Calcutta and the other in Dacca district.

A fairly early centre of the sect was at Pinddadankha on the Zelum. Further west there was a sectarian temple at Kabul.

The Rāmānandis have also big centres at Citrakūta, a place noted for Rāma's stay.

In addition to the centres described above, there are other old and important centres like the Atta Sthāna of Alwar and the Jagadīś-vara temple of Ahmedabad. The latter has a strength of about 500 resident Sādhus. At the time of Dr. Chapekar's visit to this temple a Sādhu was seen engaged in distributing Prasāda to lay devotees. In trying to cope with their unending queue the Sadhu's hand was moving like a machine.

We cannot close this section about Rāmānandi centres without mentioning three individuals, who though not heads of centres have been very remarkable. One of them, a lady by name Biṭṭanadevī was in charge of the Rājādhirāja temple at Bakri-Pole in Ahmedabad. She has been noted to have carried out the onerous duty of feeding all the Sādhus of Ahmedabad year in and year out. She managed some Vaishnava festivals and in that connection started the novel practice of organizing lectures for ladies. Though herself not an orator and perhaps not highly learned, her benign influence was extensively felt. Another personality, much younger than Biṭṭanadevī and almost at the other corner of the country, equally deserves

mention. He is Brahmacāri Vāsudevācārya of Ayodhya. He is a solitary ascetic living in a solitary room in a temple with whose management he is not concerned. He takes his meals at one of the local Rāmānandi centres, repairs to his room and carries on his literary and organizational activity. He is of middle age,being about thirty-five. He has been conducting in Hindi a periodical called '*Virakta*', 'Recluse.' It reports the activities of all ascetics irrespective of not only their denominational affiliation but also of the fact whether they are Vaishnavas or Śaivas. Through it, he carries on political education as well. He had a very warm regard for the Indian National Congress and its political activity and courted imprisonment in connection with its work in 1942. Now he claims himself to be a disillusioned person and as such is engrossed in the affairs of the Rāmarājya Pariṣad. He actively works in the cause of the Virakta-Mahā-Maṇḍala, an organization which seeks to bring together all ascetics irrespective of their sect. This is no doubt a healthy sign and a progressive step. For two centuries at least Śaiva and Vaishnava ascetics were at loggerheads and had not only despised one another but also had killed one another in fairly large numbers. The organization in the cause of which Brahmacāri Vāsudevācārya is working seeks to substitute co-operation between the Śaiva and Vaishnava ascetics in place of their traditional animosity. Mahanta Sītārāmśāstri, as his name shows, is rather an extraordinary person for an ascetic. At Nasik he has two Rāma temples in his charge, which had the distinction of being the first to be thrown open to the untouchable classes, the scheduled castes. His political activity is so extensive that there is hardly any time for him to follow his ascetic rules. He suffered imprisonment in the cause of the Indian National Congress more than once. He worked as a close collaborator of Śraddhānanda in his work of reclaiming Malkana Rajputs. He is an effective orator in Hindi.

The Rāmānandis, though their exact numbers are not known, are generally considered to be the largest single sect among ascetics. The number of ascetic disciples taking their religious education at

the various Pāṭhaśālas conducted by Rāmānandi centres about the year 1939 was 233.

Rāmānandi Bairāgis are distinguished as of three kinds: 1. Sthānadhāri (Asthānadhāri), 2. Khālsā and 3. Ākhāḍāmalla. The last forms the Nāgā, the fighting section, and will be dealt with separately. The Sthānadhāris, both the Mahant, that is, the head, and the commoners, keep to one place and carry on their religious duties. The Khālsās mostly wander about to propagate the religious doctrines of their sect. There are centres where even two to three hundred Bairāgis are met with. But most of the centres are small and their inmates do not count above twenty.

Though Rāmānanda was a reformer, in his order are to-day freely admitted only members of the first three castes. Of the Śūdra caste only Sat-Śūdras are admitted on equal terms. Asat-Śūdras and untouchable classes, though admitted, have generally to keep separate centres and maintain separate temples of their own. Only the regular worshipper of the idol in any temple belonging to the ascetics of the first three castes is allowed to enter the holy of holies. He is invariably a Brahmin. In actual practice it seems, only Brahmins cook the food that is served to the ascetics. All ascetics fully ordained, excepting Asat-Śūdras and untouchables, sit in one row for taking meals. The Mahanta of one centre at Ayodhya contested a reserved seat for the Scheduled Castes in the last General Election on behalf of the Rāmarājya Pariṣad.

Strictly speaking, only the Mahanta of a centre, 'sthāna', could initiate an ascetic disciple. It used to be the practice to test a would-be ascetic for six months to a year before ordaining him. His people used to be consulted for permission. But now-a-days almost all these practices are set at naught. We were informed that as the flow of entrants has become slender and as a Sādhu's having no disciple is considered as much of an unhappiness as the sonlessness of a householder there is a keen desire on the part of Sādhus to ordain disciples. Under such dispensation, rules naturally tend

to be observed more in their breach than in their practice. This deterioration has gone to such an extent that even Ākhāḍāwālā Sādhus ordain their own disciples. Formerly if a Mahanta of an Ākhāḍā did such a thing he was immediately brought to book before a 'pancāyat' and fined. The dearth of new entrants and the competition to secure ascetic disciples have conspired to give rise even to some malpractices. And a number of complaints that Sādhus kidnap children are freely voiced.

The initiation of a novitiate is generally performed in the morning. The rite resembles the Brahmanic ceremony of giving the sacred thread. Of course there is here no sacred thread. Instead there are five bestowals. They are: name, necklace-rosary, forehead sect-mark, representative stamp, and 'Mantra', the sacred formula. The representative stamp, 'Mudrā', is formed of bow and arrow. It represents the typical activity of Rāma, the tutelary deity. The mark has to be a 'tapta-mudrā', that is to say, has to be permanently branded on the body. The necklace which is of 108 Tulasi-beads and generally singles-tranded has to be worn close to the neck, except in the case of the Nāgās who wear it rather loose. The forehead sect-mark is of four kinds. The first variety is formed of two white vertical lines with a red vertical one midway between them. It resembles the mark worn by Rāmānujis and is called Raktaśrī. The second one is called Śuklaśrī as in it the third line too is white. The third variety consists in substituting a red dot in place of the middle line. In the fourth variety, two white vertical lines only are drawn. Those wearing the third variety, called Bindivāle on account of the dot or 'bindi', form by far the bulk of the Rāmānandi Bairāgis. The sacred formula imparted to ascetics is formed by seven letters as against the twelve which compose the one meant for the householders of the Rāmānandi sect. Twelve-lettered formula for the householders is known as Vāsudeva-mantra and the seven-lettered one for the ascetics is known as Rāma-mantra. As this Rāma formula is not prefixed

with the mystic syllable Om, the Rāmānujis castigate the Rāmānandis as a non-Vedic sect.

The garment generally used is white. But members of one small section, mostly confined to Citrakūṭa, put on a yellow-coloured one. Their greeting formula too is different and stresses not only the importance of Sītā but also her union with Rāma. The formula in general use is Jaya Sītārāma.

Females can be ordained ascetics in this sect; and female ascetics are met with. They receive their initiation either from a male Mahanta or a female one, which means that though we have not come across any, there possibly are female-heads of monastic centres. And that is perfectly natural because generally female ascetics have a separate centre of their own, which is called Māi-wāḍā, 'Mothers' habitation'. There are some female ascetics to be met with even in male monastic centres. We are happy to say that we did not come across any evil report on that account.

A male ascetic has his name most commonly ending in Dāsa. Some of them use the suffix Prasāda and others again Śaraṇa. The names of female ascetics invariably end in Dāsī. We were informed that formerly, that is to say before the time of Pavahāri Śrī Krishnadāsa, all male names used to end in Ānanda. It kept up the tradition of the founder of the sect, Rāmānanda. It was Pavahāri who, styling himself Śrī Krishnadāsa, introduced names ending in Dāsa. Dāsa indicates humility; and Pavahāri may have preferred this name in order to better equip himself in his appeal to the people as against his adversary Tārānātha, the 'nātha' in whose name suggested overbearing superiority.

Latterly, some senior ascetics of the sect have begun the practice of styling themselves Ācārya, the word being suffixed to their ascetic name. According to sectarian opinion this was formerly considered to be the privilege of the Mahantas of the Galata Gādi, whose apostolic list records the Ācāryas from the sixth in

descent from the original founder. It should be clear from this account that Ācāris (Ācāryas) is not a sub-sect of the Rāmānandis as Oman[27] tells his readers. Nor are Khākis and Samnyāsis. Khāki, as we shall have occasion to point out later, is an ākhāḍā of Vaishnava Bairāgis. The discrepancy between our account of Rāmānandis and that of Oman is due to the defective nature of Oman's information rather than any change in the practices of the Rāmānandi sect.

We have not stated anything about the disposal of the dead ascetic so far ; and here we may make some observations about it. Generally when an ascetic is dead, according to his doctrinal affiliation the event is euphemistically described. He is said to have become one with Brahma or with Śiva, or to have departed to Śiva's region or to Kailāsa or to Vaikuṇṭha and so on. The dead body is buried as is the common practice or is thrown into flowing water. The Rāmānandis, when any ascetic of theirs dies, describe him as having gone to reside at Sāketa. Sāketa is an old name of Ayodhya. The Rāmānandis believe that their tutelary deity Rāma permanently lives at Sāketa. When a particularly famous Mahanta dies, they dress his body in silken garments and carry it in a contrivance called 'vimāna'.[28]

They observe most of the Hindu holidays. Needless to say all 'Ekadaśīs', the eleventh day of every lunar fortnight, and the Rāma's ninth are observed as fasts. They have added to their repertory of fasts and festivals Jānaki's ninth and Rāma's marriage day. The former falls on the ninth of the bright half of Vaiśākha and the latter, on the fifth of the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa. On the sixth day of the bright half of Bhādrapada they observe the day of the sun.

There is a regular rhetoric of devotional sentiments which is called Rasaśāstra developed by the followers of Caitanya out of the Rasa theory of poetics and adapted for the treatment of the emo-

tional aspect of Vaishnava Bhakti. S. K. De[29] has given an excellent summary of the doctrine based on the most important works of that school. We have no desire to go over that ground; but in our investigation of the practices of the Rāmānandis we have come across their grammar of Bhakti sentiment[30] which though not as elaborate as that of the Caitanyaites presents a slightly different view, which we regard as psychologically more accurate. Its existence and adoption too has caused some sub-sectional differentiation.

Bhakti sentiment, according to Rāmānandis, can be expressed and realized through any one of five mental states with their appropriate behaviour patterns. These states are Śṛñgāra-erotic attitude, Sakhya-friendly attitude, Vātsalya-parental attitude, Dāsya-servitude, and Śānta-attitude of blissfulness. Devotion with the blissful attitude is instanced as in the case of the great sage Vasiṣṭha, who is proverbially known for his quietism and unperturbed equanimity. A devotee realizing his devotion with this attitude approaches the condition of Samādhi and typifies the Upanisadic doctrine of Brahmānanda. Needless to say, a large number of Rāmānandi ascetics as their name-ending shows exercise their devotion through the Dāsya attitude. Vātsalya attitude is naturally confined to a small number, only some of the very senior ascetics having the courage to indulge in it. In this form, the devotee places himself in the position of the father and the mother of his tutelary deity. Pictures are seen where a famous Bairāgi is shown with the idol of his tutelary deity seated in his lap. In the erotic way of expressing and realizing one's devotion, the devotee imagines himself to be the wife of his tutelary deity. In this case he believes himself to be Sītā. Ascetics have been seen wearing a female garment and feigning to be Sītā in their behaviour towards Rāma's idol. Though they are a small section they are so peculiar that they are spoken of as a branch named Svasukhi, self-happy. It is evidently a repercussion of the Vallabha-Caitanya development of Krishna devotion in Vrindāvan. One ascetic Jivārāma went even further and at Citrakut attempted to create Vrindāvan. Both the

varieties are together known as the Rasik branch of Rāmānandis. Their literature even though described as *Bhajanataraṅgiṇī* contains a lot of pornographic detail. The friendly attitude of devotion can be typified by the devotees behaving as female companions of the tutelary deity. Such behaviour is feasible if the tutelary deity is Rādhākrishna. The devotee in that case can look upon himself and behave as Rādhā, considered as the female companion and not the mistress of Krishna. But how this attitude can be expressed and realized if the tutelary deity is Sītārāma we do not understand. Sītā was only the wife of Rāma. How a devotee can look upon himself as Sītā and yet behave as the female companion of Rāma is not at all clear.

If the majority have thus gone on the Bhakti side and have developed some of its esoteric details, at least one important centre has maintained a more austere type of sectarian practice. In writing about the Galata Gādi we indicated that its founder Pavahāri Krishnadāsa, who was adept in Yogic practices, had some previous connection with Nāthapanthis. We have also stated that the centre which he captured for the Rāmānandi sect formerly belonged to the Nāthapanthis. Tradition informs us that Pavahāri's immediate disciple Kilhadāsa established the practice of 'yoga' as a necessary ingredient of Rāma-devotion for the inmates and followers of his centre. This branch is still known as Tāpasī śākhā, 'penance branch'.

The daily routine of a Rāmānandi Bairāgi begins very early in the morning at about 4 A.M. Immediately after finishing his bath, he begins the muttering of the sacred formula. While still engaged on it, he begins the usual worship of his tutelary deity. Having completed it he starts reading his favourite religious book. Then he attends to any appointed task of his at the centre. A large number of Sādhus take only one meal at mid-day. In the afternoon they visit temples and listen to religious discourses. The younger ones have to attend a Pāṭhaśālā to take their Sanskrit education. Some of the older ones may occupy themselves in some of the

mortifying practices of Yoga. Old and decrepit Sādhus are taken care of at the centre. There are always younger Sādhus available and ready to attend to such.

The 'sthāna's or centres have their own Mahantas who manage the estate which consists of land whether ordinary or Inām, of buildings, and of visit-perquisites received from lay devotees. It is the business of the Mahanta to provide food and shelter not only to all the Bairāgis of his centre but also to others who happen to visit his centre. He also maintains discipline. If any Bairāgi commits an offence against traditional observances, he pronounces a punishment. It generally consists in muttering of prayers and in service of other Bairāgis. The latter generally takes the form of manual labour in the kitchen or in the rest of the building or in the garden or fields. If the offence is rather serious and such as is likely to affect the prestige of the sect a 'pancāyat' is called. We were informed that such occasions are rather rare.

Most centres of this sect manage not only Pāṭhaśālās but also Gośālās or cattle-sheds where all kinds of cattle are taken care of. It should be noted that though among the cattle there may be milch cows, nobody cares to milk them. The Bairāgis do not as a rule use milk in their daily food. They also manage some dispensaries. This is the only new type of social work they appear to have taken up, if we leave aside the political activity of some, which we have already noted.

Catuhsampradayi Nagas or Militant Bairagis

We have stated that there are three types of Rāmānandi Bairāgis. One of them is known as Ākhāḍamallas, that is the athletes of the ākhāḍās. Ākhāḍā is a term we have already come across in connection with the organization of the Nāgā or the fighting Samnyāsis. Ākhāḍamallas of the Rāmānandis may otherwise be called the Nāgā or the fighting Bairāgis. The other Vaishnava sects too have a section among their ascetics who are organized in and belong to ākhāḍās and not to Sthānas, the ordinary monastic centres. The four sects, really speaking, divide themselves into two sections: the worshippers of Rādhā-Krishna and those of Rāma with Sītā. This difference is emphasized in their banners, the Rāmānandis having a banner distinct from that of the other sects. The features of the difference cannot be rationally explained. The Nāgā ascetics of the Vaishnavas unfurl both the flags during processions.

The fighting section of the Bairāgis and their appropriate organization is not only very late in the life of Vaishnava sectarianism but is also much later than the organization of the Nāgā Samnyāsis of the Śaiva sect. As we have seen, none of the ākhāḍās of the Nāgā Samnyāsis is later than A.D. 1600. The organization of the ākhāḍās of the Vaishnava Bairāgis is more or less known to have taken place between A.D. 1650 and 1700. It is said that one Bhairava Giri Gosāvi had vowed not to take his daily meals without killing at least one Vaishnava Bairāgi. The Vaishnavas, too, had their counterpart of Bhairava Giri in one Rāmadāsa of theirs. He would not take his meals without killing at least one Samnyāsi. So great, we are told, was the enmity between the two divisions of

ascetics. Small wonder then that there were frequent bloody fights between them, especially at the time of the Kumbha assemblage. Elsewhere we have noted the occurrence of a bloody fight at Hardwar in 1760. Very much before that, according to a copper-plate inscription, a copy of which was shown to Dr. Chapekar by Mahanta Rādhāmohanadāsaji of Nasik, a great massacre of Bairāgis had taken place at Nasik at the Simhastha fair in 1690, at the hands of Śaiva Samnyāsis. One Dayārāmadāsaji, the Mahanta of the Khaki Ākhāḍā at Chitrakut, filed a complaint in the court of the Peshwas and got a decision, in time for the Simhastha fair of A.D. 1702, that the Bairāgis shall bathe at the Ramakunda and the Samnyāsis at the Trimukha (Trimbak) Kushavarta. The same arrangement has continued till to-day. Previously both the ascetic divisions used to bathe at Chakra-tirtha which lies in between the above-mentioned two localities. Whether the record is authentic or not, we are not sure. We find that Nasik was not included in the dominion of the Peshwa at the date at which he is represented to have given his decision. If however, the document can be considered authentic then the date for the establishment of the military organization of the Bairāgis may be very reasonably put down at A.D. 1700 instead of between 1650 and 1700 as we have opined above.

In a Jaipur Chronicle (Tawarikh), according to the information given by the Nimbārki Pandit Vrajavallabhasharaṇaji, there is some information about Vaishnava ākhāḍās recorded in the year A.D. 1713. De[1] refers to the tradition about a conference, which appears to be the same at which the military organization of the Vaishnava Bairāgis was decided upon. At that conference, the Caitanyaite Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is believed to have claimed Mādhva affiliation for his followers. The active period of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's life is believed to be in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. We were told by Rāmānandi ascetics that the ākhāḍā organization is two hundred and fifty to three hundred years old. The probable date of the military organization of the Bairāgis may, therefore, be put down as between A.D. 1650 to 1700.

Over the conference of Vaishnava ascetics held at Burhanapur in the Galata valley, Jaipur State, Sri Vrindāvanadevaji Maharaj of the Nimbārki sect presided. One Bālānandaji of the Rāmānandi sect was entrusted with the task of organizing the Nāgā section of the Bairāgis in an appropriate manner to enable the Vaishnava Bairāgis to withstand the onslaughts at the holy places of pilgrimage made by Śaiva Samnyāsis, who were already well-organized. He is said to have formed three 'ani's. 'Ani' is evidently a short form of the Sanskrit word anīkā, meaning an army. Bālānanda also established seven ākhāḍās. An ākhāḍā, as we have stated earlier, denotes a gymnastic centre where athletes keep in training. According to a Rāmānandi sectarian work the word ākhāḍā is to be derived from the Sanskrit word 'akhaṇḍa', undivided; but we are unable to see the connection between the two words.

The 'ani' may be likened to the division of a regular army. The three 'ani's are Digambara, Nirmohi and Nirvāṇi. Of these Digambara is the most important. Each 'ani' elects its own leader known as Śrī-Mahanta at the time of the Kumbha assemblage. Of the three Śrī-Mahantas, that of the Digambara Ani takes precedence over the other two. The seven original ākhāḍās are Digambara, Nirvāṇi, Nirmohi, Khāki, Nirālambi, Santoṣi and Mahānirvāṇi. To these, later on came to be added some others like Jhāḍiyā, Mālādhāri, Dhuriā, Ṭāṭambari, Balabhadri, Rādhāvallabhi, Viṣṇuswāmi and Ukhaḷa.

The ākhāḍā organization accommodates the Nāgā section of the ascetics of the sects that we have dealt with in the last chapter and others that we shall deal with in the next. As in the case of Śaiva ascetics, so in that of the Bairāgis, the Nāgā ascetics of each sect have their own separate monastic centre, which is termed the Asthāni Ākhāḍā to distinguish it from the Ramata Ākhāḍā that is an Ākhāḍā on the move. In the stationary ākhāḍā only the Nāgās of that sect usually stay, though theoretically any Catuḥ-sampradāyi Nāgā can stay at any Catuḥ-sampradāyi ākhāḍā. Thus,

for example, there is the Santoṣi Ākhāḍā in the Śrī Sampradāya of the Rāmānandis. The Harivyāsis, too, have among them a Santoṣi ākhāḍā. Dr. Chapekar was informed that at the respective centres of the Rāmānandis and of the Harivyāsis, only the Rāmānandi Santoṣis and the Harivyāsi Santoṣis would, in ordinary practice, be found as residents, though theoretically it was possible for a Harivyāsi Santoṣi to be staying as an inmate of a Rāmānandi Santoṣi ākhāḍā. Dr. Chapekar visited the Khāki Ākhāḍā of Rāmānandis at Ayodhya. He found that not only did all the inmates belong to the Rāmānandi sect but they were also Khākis. On the other hand, he found that the Mahanta, the abbot, of the Rāmānandi Digambara Ākhāḍā at Nasik was a Nimbārki, Mahanta Rādhāmohanadāsaji. Here it must be borne in mind against facile interpretation that Digambara is both an ākhāḍā and an 'ani'.*

As is seen in the tabular statement, six of the original ākhāḍās are common to the Nimbārki and the Rāmānandi Nāgā Bairāgis. To distinguish them as either belonging to the Nimbārkis or the Rāmānandis in respect of five of them, a qualifying term after the name of the founder is used. Thus the Nirvāṇi Ākhāḍā is either Harivyāsi Nirvāṇi or Rāmānandi Nirvāṇi according as it belongs to the Nimbārkis or to the Rāmānandis. In the case of Rāmānandi ākhāḍās the qualifying term is patterned after the name of the original founder, Rāmānanda himself. In the Sanaka Sampradāya, however, the qualifying term does not refer to the original founder of the sect, Nimbārka. It is patterned after the name of Harivyāsadeva, the 32nd apostolic preceptor in the Nimbārki succession. This fact goes to corroborate the conclusion of R. G. Bhandarkar [2] that the Nimbārki sect branched off into two sections after Harivyāsadeva, who started the ascetic order of the sect. However, the differentiation of the Digambara Ākhāḍā between the two sects of Nimbārkis and Rāmānandis militates against this view as we shall presently see.

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*A tabular statement of the Akhadas and their sect will be found at the end of the book.

The sixth common ākhāḍā is Digambara. And curiously enough it is distinguished and differentiated on the basis of the tutelary deity. The Digambara Ākhāḍā of the Nimbārkis is known as Śyāma-Digambara i. e., Digambara of the dark-coloured one, Krishna. The same ākhāḍā among the Rāmānandis is known as Rāma Digambara, that is Digambara of Rāma, the tutelary deity of the Rāmānandis. From this peculiarity of the differentiation one may reasonably conclude that originally there was only one ākhāḍā namely Digambara, which being common to Nimbārkis and Rāmānandis, had to be distinguished at a time when the Rāmānandis could not secure independent recognition for Rāmānanda beside Rāmānuja. That is Rāmānandis could not meet the Nimbārkis on terms of equality. The best way under the circumstances was to distinguish the ākhāḍās on the basis of the tutelary deity. It is in keeping with this position that the Digambara Ani and its Mahanta receive precedence among the anis and their leaders. Among the Rāmānandis, the privilege of being the custodian of the foot-prints of Rāmānanda, which is enjoyed by the Digambara ākhāḍā, by itself confirms its pristine antiquity. On all important or special occasions, the banner of the Digambara Ani has the exclusive privilege of receiving honorific gifts. The fact that under the Digambara Ani the only three ākhāḍās grouped are all Digambara is also an important indication of the Digambara Ākhāḍā being the oldest. Of the three Digambara Ākhāḍās again, the Dhuriyā Digambara is, according to tradition, a late formation of Khāki refugees given shelter by the Digambaris. Originally, therefore, the Digambara Ani was composed of only two ākhāḍās. Both of them were Digambara, one belonging to the Nimbārkis known as the Śyāma-Digambara and the other to the Rāmānandis known as the Rāma Digambara.

Digambara Ākhāḍā may thus be looked upon as the original organization. Its name, unlike the names of almost all the remaining ākhāḍās, is self-explanatory and befits the monastic centre of naked ascetics. Digambara means sky-clad, that is, naked. It

served well as a starting point of distinction from similar organization of the Śaiva Samnyāsis, whose ākhāḍā organization is, no doubt, much older than that of the Bairāgis. It, however, does not include any ākhāḍā with this name. It is possible that two more ākhāḍās, Nirvāṇi and Nirmohi were formed not very long after the starting of the Digambara Ākhāḍā. It is interesting to note that out of these, Nirvāṇi is a name which occurs in the list of the names of the ākhāḍas of the Śaiva Samnyāsis as well. Nirvāṇi of the Samnyāsis is otherwise known amongst them as Mahānirvāṇi. Curiously both the Nimbārkis and the Rāmānandis have amongst them the Mahānirvāṇi Ākhāḍā separate and distinct from the Nirvāṇi. None of the ākhāḍās of the Samnyāsis is styled after its founder, though, according to tradition, all the founders are definitely known. Among the Bairāgis, there is only one exception and that is of Viṣnusvāmi Ākhāḍā, which is called after the founder of the sect. The fact that soon after the sect was founded as an ascetic one it turned itself into one consisting largely of householders perhaps explains the situation.

As the names of the orders of Śaiva ascetics have a lore about them so have the ākhāḍās of the Bairāgis. We have already explained the etymological significance of the ākhāḍā-name Digambara. Nirvāṇi, we are informed, is so called because the members have renounced sensual desires, while Mahānirvāṇi is so styled because the members feel happiness in salvation. We think no comment is necessary on the arbitrary and the fatuitous nature of these traditional explanations. The explanations offered of the two names Khāki and Nirālambi, namely that their members feel happiness in contemplation of Brahma and do not depend on secondary deities respectively, only corroborate the foregoing observation. About the name Dhuriyā there is a funny story. Once upon a time some Rāmānandi Nāgā Bairāgis of the Khāki Ākhādā began to smoke their earthenware pipe with a piece of cloth having Hanuman's banner on it. Other Bairāgis feeling offended at the sacrilegious act attacked them who ran for their lives. They were given shel-

ter by members of the Digambara Ākhāḍā. As the running Bairāgis sheltered by the Digambara Ākhāḍā were all strewn over with dust, Dhuli, they came to be known as Dhuriyā. It is true that the ākhāḍā is formally designated as Dhuriyā Digambara and not as merely Dhuriyā. One so-called ākhāḍā, which we have not included in our tabular statement, is Ukhaḷa by name. We have failed to ascertain its meaning. We know that it is remembered only when the ākhāḍā of a deceased Nāgā is not known. Such a Nāgā is given the last rites in the name of the Ukhaḷa Ākhāḍā.

We have already mentioned that there are fifty-two Dwārās, 'doors', or branches, of the four sects of the Vaishnava Bairāgis. The Nāgās of these sects, too, belong to one or the other of these Dwārās. The Dwārā affiliation was significant in the past in so far as a Nāgā ascetic could establish his identity to other Vaishnava Bairāgis through an esoteric formula in which his Dwārā figured. For all practical purposes the Dwārā affiliation has very little meaning for a Nāgā in these days. His ākhāḍā-membership, on the other hand, is all important. Not only is it the unit with which his daily life is inextricably bound up, but it also determines his membership of the ani, the divisional organization of the fighting Bairāgis.

To the Digambara Ani belong the three Digambara Ākhāḍās namely, Rāma-Digambara, Śyāma-Digambara and Dhuriyā-Digambara. In the Nirmohi Ani there are three Rāmānandi Ākhāḍās, namely, Nirmohi, Santoṣi and Mahānirvāṇi; there are five Nimbārki–Harivyāsi Ākhāḍās, namely, Nirmohi, Santoṣi, Mahānirvāṇi, Mālādhāri and Jhāḍia; and one Brahma Sampradāyi called Rādhāvallabhi. The only ākhāḍā of the Rudra Sampradāya is Viṣnusvāmi and is included in this ani. Tod informs us that the Viṣnusvāmis or, Bishan-Swāmis as he calls them, settled down in Marwar about A. D. 1779 and that a body of them under their Mahanta Kaimdas was in the army of Raja Mansingh who succeeded in getting his claims recognized in A.D. 1804.[3] To the Nirvāṇi Ani are assigned three Rāmānandi Ākhāḍās, namely, Nirvāṇi,

Nirālambi and Ṭāṭambari. Nimbārki Harivyāsis contribute their Nirvāṇi and Nirālambi Ākhāḍās to this 'ani'. The Balabhadra Ākhāḍā of the Brahma Sampradāya also belongs here.

The 'ani' organization actually comes into operation only at the time and the place of the Kumbha assemblage. Yet such permanent insignia as the banner, which may ordinarily be unfurled only at the Kumbha assemblage, is in the keeping of the Śrī Mahanta of the 'ani'. Each of the three 'ani's has its own banner. That of the Digambara Ani is really the only distinctive one. The standard banner is 13½ ft. wide and 6 ft. high. A smaller variety is sometimes used on less formal occasions. It is formed of five pieces of silk cloth each one of a different colour. The five colours are dark blue, red, yellow, green and white. On the front side, it bears a picture of the monkey-god Hanuman and on the reverse, the Sun-god riding his seven-horse chariot. The top of the pole of this banner is crowned with an inverted 'kalaśā', pot. This design of banner is the peculiarity of the Rāmānandi sect. The banner of the remaining three sects carries the picture of the divine bird Garuḍa, eagle, in place of that of the Sun-god. And we are reliably informed that this type of banner is raised side by side with the standard Rāmānandi one by the Digambara Ani. The banners of the Nirmohi and the Nirvāṇi Anis are doubly distinguished from that of the Digambara. First, their cloth is single-coloured, yellow and white being respectively the colours of the Nirmohi and Nirvāṇi banners. Second, the top-end of the poles of these banners are not covered with an inverted 'kalaśa', pot. A story is told to account for this difference. In one of the numerous fights between the Śaiva Samnyāsis and the Vaishnava Bairāgis, the crowns of the banners of the Nirmohi and Nirvāṇi Anis were cut off and carried away by the Samnyāsis as trophies. It is since that time that the banners of these 'anis' have remained crownless. In spite of this story we think that the true explanation lies in the antiquity and priority of the Digambara Ani.

At the Kumbha assemblage, the various ākhāḍās encamp

fairly distinctly and separately according to their sectarian affiliation. The banners of the ākhāḍā and the sect are unfurled at each camp. At the headquarters, in front of the camp of the Śrī Mahanta of the 'ani', the standard Ani banner stands unfurled. At the camp of the Śrī Mahanta of the Digambara Ani, where the five-coloured banner keeps fluttering, any one who answers to the call of the meal being ready is fed without distinction. It is interesting to note that the call announcing the meal is composed of the two words designating the two deities of the Vaishnavas and the Śaivas, namely, Hari-Hara.

In the formal procession for the bath, the Digambara Ani with its standard banner as well as the sectarian one marches in the centre at the head of the formation. The Nirmohi Ani with its two banners marches on its right, and the Nirvāṇi keeps on the left. The big kettledrum (naubata) beats in front of the banner of the Digambara Ani and a much smaller one satisfies the martial spirit of the Nirvāṇis. It is in keeping with the high-souding martial terminology and the majestic paraphernalia of these occasions that the drum of the Digambara Ani is designated 'Garbhaganji', that is one whose sound is loud enough to cause abortion. The banners intended for these occasions are made up of costly materials and embroidered with not only gold and silver thread but also with pearls.

Richly caparisoned elephants and elaborately equipped camels and horses march in the procession which thus acquires the appearance of a royal march. The Sādhus marching in the procession put on a 'śendura' (red lead) mark on their forehead. Those of the Digambara Ani have to apply it in the centre which is their position in the procession. Corresponding to their place in the formation, Sādhus of the Nirmohi Ani have to wear the lead mark on the right side of the forehead, and those of the Nirvāṇi on the left side in keeping with their position. In return procession after the bath, the Nirmohi and Nirvāṇi Anis interchange their positions. An artificial addition to the matted hair called 'śaili' is a fashionable

adjunct to the Bairāgi paraphernalia. Only some of them can afford it. And the surprising fact is that those who can afford cannot wear it as they like. The Bairāgis have to wear it in a particular position according to their 'ani' affiliation. The Nāgās of the Digambara Ani typifying their position wear it in the centre; and those of the Nirmohi and Nirvāṇi Anis put it on the right and the left sides of the head respectively.

No Mahanta of an ākhāḍā can initiate or ordain an ascetic. All Nāgās, therefore, are ordained by the Mahants of monastic centres called 'sthāna's. Nāgās thus begin as ordinary novitiates. In the first stage of his ordination a novitiate is called 'Yātri'. He continues in this state for three years. He is otherwise known as Chhorā, whose business it is to offer water and such other small services to the older inmates of the centre. For the next three years he is known as the 'Banagidar', and his duty is to help in the worship of the deity, Bhagavān. For the next three years he has to help in cooking, serving the food, etc. under the appellation of Hudaḍangā. During the last period of three years, after which he is entitled to be called a Nāgā, he is known as Muraiṭhiyā. We have been informed that the word somehow means one who is devoted to Rāma. The ascetic who is now a full-fledged Nāgā has the privilege of being known as Atīta after further twelve years. Twelve further years see him dubbed Mahā-atīta. Both 'atīta' and 'mahā-atīta' cease to take any active interest in the affairs of the ākhāḍā.

Every ākhāḍā, like every 'Sthāna', has a temple attached to it. Honorific gifts brought by lay followers of the sect are only one of the sources of income for the ākhāḍā. Other sources of income are formed by 'inam' lands and buildings owned by the ākhāḍā. The abbot, more often than not, carries on a successful business in local banking. A Nāgā ascetic on his becoming a Nāgā is expected to go on a pilgrimage and bring back for his ākhāḍā, all gifts that he collects. The Mahanta expects such a Nāgā to receive the usual honorific

gift of a rupee and four annas at least from each Sthānadhāri Mahanta whom the latter visits during the itinerary. Dr. Chapekar was informed by Mahanta Sitārāmaśāstri of Nasik that in former days Nāgās, who used to travel in companies of tens and twenties, would manhandle an abbot who hesitated to honour them with the usual gift. The honorific gift thus used to be a levy.

It is the general practice with the ascetics to nominate the would-be Mahanta during the life-time of the Mahanta. If for some reason this remains undone, then the abbots of the ākhāḍās belonging to the four Vaishnava sects and lying within easy distance gather together and after full deliberation install the new Mahanta. The estates of the ākhāḍās are generally well-managed but instances are not lacking where a Mahanta has mismanaged the affairs of his ākhāḍā. In such a case prominent abbots of ākhāḍās and 'Sthāna's nearby irrespective of their affiliation, whether Śaiva or Vaishnava, gather in deep concern and make an earnest effort to set the matter right.

Reformist Bairagis

Rāmānanda represented somewhat of a revolt against the caste-ridden organization of Rāmānujis of his time. In a way Rāmānandis were thus reformists. As in the case of Śaiva Samnyāsis, here too, we have thought it best not to magnify a minor development in the matter of liberalizing admission to the sect into a reformist school. When sects or leaders of sects start a departure in the matter of religious faith or the object of their worship, or again when they throw open the doors of their fold to either scheduled castes or to non-Hindus on terms of equality, the development they seek is not a minor one. It is a truly reformist attitude and practice.

For a sect to throw aside idol-worship in practice is a very bold step in a society where rank idol-worship has flourished for more than two thousand years. This idol-worship itself came to be conceived and practised only some centuries after the most pantheistic view of the Divinity was intuitively arrived at and emotionally preached. The Upaniṣads, principal ones of which are not later than the 8th century B.C., preach that the Divinity is Absolute Brahman which is formless, that the individual soul is not distinct from it and can realize its identity with the Absolute through meditative knowledge. They also lay down a simple course of Yogic practices designed to give the individual the necessary mental concentration.

Idol-worship which came to be practised some centuries after the promulgation and spread of these religious truths was theoreti-

cally justified as a stage in the individual's religious evolution even by strict monistic Vedantists. To idol-worship, thus theoretically propped up by philosophers, was added an emotionalism resulting from the association of the female consort of the Divinity. The emotionalism of consort-association with the Divinity was further highly surcharged with tender emotions fostered by esoteric practices, song, and dance. It was such a highly emotionalised system of idol-worship with a direct and strong appeal to most of the tender instincts of man that was to be set aside when a religious leader or his sect decided against idol-worship.

Hindus have a number of sacred books. The Vedas may be said to be pre-eminent among them. They are declared to be 'apauruṣeya', that is, divinely revealed and not man-made. The sanctity and the authority of the Vedas, for the Hindus, therefore, should be greater than that of the Bible and the Koran to the Christians and the Muslims respectively. But neither the Vedas nor any other work like the Upaniṣads or *Bhagavadgītā* have ever been made a regular object of worship at any stage or in any school of Hinduism. When a sect within the Hindu fold makes a book of sayings a regular object of worship either by itself or as an accompaniment to idols of deities, it shows, as we have contended, the influence of Islam. It indicates a movement of synthetic reaction towards the challenge thrown by Islam. Such a practice, therefore, must characterize a sect as reformist. When further a sect admits, in theory at least, non-Hindus to its fold, it marks a further step on the path of reform.

Kabīr, who is believed to have been in the discipleship of Rāmānanda, but rather questionably, appropriately begins the forward march. There is general agreement about the year of Kabīr's death. It is A.D. 1518. The same consensus of opinion does not prevail about the date of his birth. One account gives him a total life span of one hundred and eleven years. But even accepting such a long life it is not possible to see how Kabīr could

have met Rāmānanda who was born in A.D. 1300, unless we accept that account of Rāmānanda which gives him an unusually long life. Even then Kabīr could have been only four years old when Rāmānanda passed away. The supposed discipleship, therefore, is only one of faith and tradition.

One of Kabīr's own disciples by name Bhāgodās collected together his preceptor's sayings and that collection is known as Bījaka. It occupies almost the same position with Kabīrpanthis as Guru Grantha Saheb of Nānaka with the Sikhs. Kabīr preached monism and did away with idol-worship. He opposed all rites and rituals and opened the portals of his sect to both the Hindus and the Muslims. He insisted that the ascetics of the sect shall take only 'sātvic' food and eschew all intoxicants. They were enjoined to control their senses and not to accept personal service from others. They were to regard themselves as the servants of others. It is not known whether the peculiar type of 'sādhanā', or the process of religious attainment, known as 'Surata-Śabda-Yoga' was Kabīr's own dictum or a later development. The term is rather peculiar and in its plain meaning would seem to go against the austere principles of Kabīr. The plain meaning is application of attainment of charming word. But the sectarian meaning is 'nāda', sound, of consciousness, 'cetanā'. It gives the meaning of consciousness to the word 'surata', which in a straightforward manner it cannot have. It is noteworthy that the followers of the Rādhāsvāmi sect, who being all householders are not included within our purview, are influenced by Kabīrpantha and have the same doctrine and practice of Surata-Śabda-Yoga among them. The Kabīrpanthis are not opposed to the appropriate use of Yogic technique in their religious quest. It is possible that in the cultivation of this technique, Kabīr himself or some great follower of his chanced upon the Yogic attainment of Nāda-Brahma and gave to it this new appellation.

Though Kabīrpantha naturally does not attach importance to

pilgrimages, yet the ascetics of the sect carry them out like any other ascetic class. The ascetics of this sect as a whole do not consider it to be incumbent upon them to attend the Kumbha assemblage; yet quite a number of them are always to be met with at these gatherings.

According to Wilson, the twelve disciples of Kabīr – mark the coincidence or the purposeful imitation of the number of the disciples of Rāmānanda – founded twelve sub-sections or branches of the sect. Parashuramaji Chaturvedi has added a few to them. Ramadas Gaud goes even better and informs his readers that not only Garībadasis of Rohatak, Rāmasanehis of Shahapur and Kinnarami Aghoris of Banaras, but also Dādupanthis and Nānakpanthis have all branched out of the Kabīrpantha. [1]

There are three important 'śākhā's or sections of Kabīrpanthis. One of them has its headquarters in Chhatisgad and is concerned largely with householders. It is a very flourishing branch. The other branch known as Surata-Gopāla is centred at Banaras. Its Mahanta and many of its followers are ascetics. There is another ascetic branch at Dhanauti in Bihar. The Banaras branch is the most important because its centre is at Kabīrcaurā. Only males are ordained at this centre and in this branch, which is therefore known as the Bāpaśākhā or the Father Branch. The Chhatisgad centre as well as its sub-centre there admits female ascetics and is known, therefore, as Māī Śākhā or Mother Branch. There is some difference as regards religious observances and practices among these branches. Whereas the Banaras school stresses the age-old and thoroughly orthodox path of Knowledge that of Dhanauti goes whole-heartedly for the traditional but more recent path of worship known as Bhakti-mārga and the Chhatisgad branch, almost in opposition to the teachings of Kabīr, indulges in ritualistic ways known as Karma-mārga. Though the sect is largely spread in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Vindhya Pradesh and Saurashtra, the important ascetic centres all lie east of Prayag.

At one of the small centres of Kabīrpanthi Bairāgis west of Ujjain Dr. Chapekar had an interesting experience, which we would like our readers to note. In Ahmedabad at Kabīr Mandira, the Mahanta of the centre Ratandāsaji is one of the few educated and progressive ascetics we know of. From his daily life and observance we know that the tradition and taste for producing literature on religious and philosophical topics has continued to be a feature of Kabīrpanthis. The practice of the technique of Yoga, too, upto a certain point appears to be one of their daily routine. Over and above being a scholar and a poet Ratandāsaji, who is a disciplinarian, is also a successful practitioner of the Indian system of medicine. He told Dr. Chapekar that as he insisted on the inmates of his monastic centre doing some work, besides religious observances for their own sake, many of them left the centre. At the time of the visit there were only about a dozen resident ascetics. Yet owing to the activities of Mahanta Ratandāsaji the place appeared to be busy almost throughout the day.

A Kabīrpanthi ascetic, whatever the minor differences of his 'śākhā', is distinguished from other Bairāgis by the pyramidal cap of white material on his head. Ordinarily the ascetics of this sect put on white garment. The forehead-mark is formed by two upright lines of white material with generally a dot in the centre. This dot is of some black material in the case of ascetics of the Dhanauti branch. It is thus identical with that of the Nimbārki Bairāgis. The Dharamdāsi branch of Chhatisgad altogether dispenses with this dot. Its ascetics distinguish themselves by daubbing the upper eye-lids with sandal-paste. Another section of Kabīrpanthi Bairāgis branches off these two perpendicular lines so that they look like forked sticks. The lines begin from the tip of the nose. There is no insistence on wearing the necklace-rosary, but when it is worn it contains 108 'Tulasi' beads. Ascetics of almost all the branches excepting that of Dhanauti end their names in Dāsa. Those of Dhanauti substitute Dāsa by Bhagata.

The most important and characteristic observance of the Kabīrpanthis, which is unfailingly observed at two of the most important centres of the sect namely Banarasi and Chhatisgadi, is what is called by them Caukā and Ārti. Ārti is a kind of group-prayer to the accompaniment of the waving of light, which is a well-known item in the complex system of worship of orthodox Hinduism. Etymologically the word Ārti means distress or the call of the distressed. The observance of this group-prayer presupposes an idol in front of the devotee. It is, therefore, understandable that in other branches of Kabīrpantha, which at its start did away with idol-worship, should not only not observe this form of group-prayer but even actively ignore it. The Caukā and Ārti observance takes place every Sunday and on the 15th of the bright half of every month. Of the latter days, those in the months of Bhādrapada and Phālguna are considered to be of particularly great sanctity. Kabīrpanthis observe a fast on such days and gather in the Kabīr-Mandira of their place a little after sun-down for the performance of the rite.

For the purpose of the observance a convenient spot in the building which is called, be it noted, 'Mandira', temple, is smeared with cowdung and made clean and neat. On it a rectangle of fixed dimensions, $11\frac{3}{4}$ ft. in length and $7\frac{1}{2}$ ft. in width is marked out with wheat flour. Within this rectangle a square of 4 ft. is filled out with wheat flour. This square is Caukā. And the observance takes its name because of it. Caukā literally means a square. In the centre of the square some flowers are kept. The abbot of the monastic centre sits in front of it with two pots on his right side. In one of them there are 125 betel-leaf savoury packets. In the other pot, there is what is called Caraṇatīrtha. Caraṇatīrtha, as we have made it clear in connection with the practices of the Udāsi Samnyāsis, is the water with which the feet of the abbot are washed. On the left side of the abbot stand a jar full of water, one cocoanut and some sweets. The abbot first of all reads from some sacred book of the sect, preferably from the most sacred of them the Bīja-

ka, and waves the small lighted ghee-lamp, which itself is called the Ārti, in front of the Caukā. Placing it on one side he breaks the cocoanut. He then lights some camphor, puts it in the lighted lamp-pot and waves it again in front of the Caukā. This Ārti then is taken round among the persons gathered there for them to pay obeisance to it. The lighted lamp thereafter is placed on the wheat flour in the Caukā. Cocoanut pieces, the sweets and the betel-leaf savoury packets are distributed among the gathering. After this, is prepared what is called 'Jyotaprasāda', 'Flame-benedictory-Gift'. A little wheat flour from under the lighted lamp standing in the Caukā is mixed with some other wheat flour, a few cocoanut gratings and a little ghee. The abbot then makes out of it small pills. The Caraṇatīrtha in the pot is used to knead a little sod of earth into a thickish paste. It is then turned into small pills. Both these types of pills and the betel-leaf savoury packets are distributed to the gathering. In view of the belief about this composite benedictory gift, which is called Parawānā or permit, it is significant to note that the betel-leaves, out of which the savoury packets are prepared, are previously exposed overnight in the open. If this is not done, there would be no sanctity attached to the savoury packets. It is believed that the composite gift mentioned above is the representation of the body of Kabīr and that the devotee who eats it attains salvation.

The sect admits female ascetics who either live separately or in male monastic centres as is convenient.

When Kabīrpanthi ascetics meet, they greet each other with the formula Sāheba Bandagī. Bairāgis of the Banaras branch repeat it three times, others only once.

It is remarkable that there is no Nāgā section among the Kabīrpanthi Bairāgis.

Kabīr did not countenance idol-worship nor do his followers, in theory, believe in it. Yet in most Kabīrpanthi places of worship

are to be found in a prominent place a picture of Kabīr and replicas of his rosary and cap. And prayers are always offered in front of this paraphernalia. The old story of Buddhism here repeats itself!

Rādhāvallabhis, who in spite of their nonchalance like to claim the foundation of their sect by God Nārāyaṇa himself, are another sect of reformist Bairāgis. Their claim to the rank of reformists is their defiance about membership of and affiliation with the four traditional Vaishnava sects. They do not attach any sanctity to the four months of the rains during which Hindu gods are believed to be asleep. Nor do they observe fasts. For one reason or another they do not observe the daily Sandhyā adoration in their sect nor do they insist on their followers offering Śrāddhas to the manes. They do not observe any caste restrictions.

The sect was actually founded by Hita Harivaṁśa, about whose year of death there is general agreement. Hita Harivaṁśa of Vrindāvan died in A.D. 1552; and he was born either in A.D. 1502 or in 1473. Some look upon him as the disciple of one Gopālabhaṭṭa of Caitanyaite sect. Others deny that. There is an important sectarian book called *Rādhārasasudhānidhi*, which is appropriated by the Caitanyaite sect as the work of one Prabodhānanda, who was either a contemporary or a junior of Caitanya. De[2] clearly and unequivocally repudiates this claim and proclaims Hita Harivaṁśa of the Rādhāvallabhi sect as its genuine author.

The question of the authorship of the work *Rādhārasasudhānidhi* is not merely academic. The Rādhāvallabhis claim that they have made an original contribution to the religious philosophy through their theory of 'rasa'. Caitanyaite Vaishnavism, too, through the works of Rūpa Goswāmi and others has not only expanded the 'rasa' theory of Sanskrit Poetics but have also established an additional tenth 'rasa' which they call Bhakti. This contribution is so systematic that S. K. De, who is an authority on Sanskrit Poetics, calls it the Rhetoric of Bhakti. He observes:[3] "If the media-

eval troubadours of France and Italy conceived the love of Christ as an aspect of the Law and wrote a Grammar of the amorous sentiment, the mediaeval Vaishnavas of Bengal conceived the love of Krishna as an aspect of Psychology, and wrote a Rhetoric of the erotic sentiment. Since Bhakti is conceived as a Rasa, it was essentially of the nature of a subjective emotion. The literary Sarhidaya, as the recipient connoisseur, was replaced by the religious Bhakta, the devotee of nice sensibility." Now Rūpa Goswāmi could hardly have written before Hita Harivaṁśa. The claim of the Rādhāvallabhis to have made a contribution to the religious philosophy through their 'rasa' theory thus cannot be set aside if it is propounded in the *Rādhārasasudhānidhi.* As a matter of fact in the book published by the sect entitled *Rādhāsudhānidhi*, we have failed to find any 'rasa' theory.

Readers may be reminded of our statement previously made about 'Rasa' being identified with Brahma. Rādhāvallabhis assert that it is beyond Brahma; and what they seek through their religious observances is 'rasa' itself, which is a kind of ecstasy. But unlike ecstasy in general, the devotee is said to enjoy unmitigated happiness without forgetting himself. For the production of this state the pair of Rādhā and Krishna, the former as the soul of 'rasa' and the latter as its mind are necessary. Rādhā, they consider to be the married wife of Krishna and not his mistress. Small wonder that the sectarians are known as Rasikas.

The Rasika sect is composed both of ascetics and householders. The Nāgā ascetics of the Rādhāvallabhis have been already dealt with under Nāgās. First because as members of an 'ākhāḍā' they are included in an 'ani' under the appellation of Mādhva Gauḍeśvaras, and secondly because the Rasikas do not freely accept them as their own. The Rasik ascetics included here do not accept this affiliation. The high priest of the Rasikas is a householder, a descendant of Hita Harivaṁśa. The sect has evidently dwindled

in numbers and has very few important centres outside Vrindāvan.

The reformist sect of Dhāmi, though chronologically fourth in order, may conveniently be treated here as the third. The sect is so called because the sectarians describe the deity as Dhāma, abode. It is possible this is only a further development of the hatred of idol-worship. As the founder was Prāṇanātha (A.D. 1700-1750), a native of Saurashtra, the sect is also known as Prāṇanāthi. This Saurashtrian was a disciple of one Devacandra, who later was known as Nijānanda Swāmi of Saurashtra. And the sectarians, though known as Prāṇanāthis, associate Nijānanda Swāmi with the foundation of their sect.

Prāṇanātha left his native country for Bundelkhanda. Though nothing very definite is known about his life, he seems to have been an analogue of Rāmadāsa, an earlier ascetic of Maharashtra. He could claim among his disciples the famous Chhatrasāla of Bundelkhanda. Yet unlike Rāmadāsa, he seems to have enlisted among his disciples both Hindus and Muslims.[4]

The sect insists on purity of character, kindness and service to others. It does not countenance idol-worship though its tutelary deity is Krishna, and Prāṇanātha himself is believed to be his incarnation.

The principal centres of the sect are at Panna, Surat and Jamnagar. The high priest of the centre at Panna used to be the Maharaja himself. At Surat and Jamnagar a Prāṇanāthi ascetic occupies the position of the abbot. Females are admitted as ascetics. At Panna and Jamnagar there is separate arrangement for them. Though Prāṇanātha himself is believed to have accompanied Chhatrasāla in his battles against Aurangzeb, the sect does not appear to have a Nāgā section.

Their principal festivals are the Rādhāṣṭamī and Janmāṣṭamī. They also celebrate the birth anniversaries of Prāṇanātha and of his

preceptor Nijānanda Swāmi as well as of king Chhatrasāla. Unlike Rādhāvallabhis, from whom they branched off, they observe some fasts. They are generally the 4th, the 8th and the 14th of the Hindu month.

Their outward paraphernalia and appearance are identical with those of the Rādhāvallabhis.

These opponents of idol-worship not only treat the collected sayings of their teacher as the sacred book but also regularly worship it. The *Kuljum*, or *Śrī-Mukhavānī* as it is called, is seen occupying a prominent place in every Prāṇanāthi temple. Along with it, more often than not, are seen the foot-prints of Prāṇanātha. Here then is not only book-worship but book-cum-foot-print worship. As if to complete the irony of the situation, the sect itself is alternatively called 'Śrī Krishna Praṇāmi', one who bows to Śrī Krishna. Mahārājapantha or Merājapantha, Khijaḍā and Chakalā are other names by which the sect is known. The first term is derived from Mahārāja a former name of Prāṇanātha and the second one from the tree that stands near Prāṇanātha's 'samādhi'.

Dādupantha is perhaps the most important of the reformist Vaishnava sects. It is in many ways a complement of the Kabīr sect. Dādupanthis, in spite of their great cultivation of learning and notwithstanding their pride in the alternative appellation of their sect Parabrahma-Sampradāya, like to pay homage to Kabīr and to visit Kabīrcaurā at Banaras. The appellation Parabrahma is evidently taken in competition with the name of the Mādhvas, namely, Brahma-Sampradāya. Parabrahma is supreme Brahma. At the Kumbha assemblage the Nāgā ascetics of Dādupantha have successfully asserted their independence of the four regular Vaishnava sects. The standing arrangement for this assemblage permits them either to go along with these sects or as an independent unit. We have observed above that the great strength of the Kabīrpanthi Bairāgis lies to the east of the line Mathura-Ujjain or better yet

Kanauj-Ujjain. Dādupantha, whether of the householder or of the ascetic order, flourishes almost wholly on the western side of the Kanauj-Ujjain axis. Dādupanthi Bairāgis have been keeping their great centre at Naraina in Jaipur state. Naraina is the vernacular of Nārāyaṇa-grāma, the village of Nārāyaṇa. It is twenty miles from Jaipur. Another important centre is at Hardwar. The spread of the sect covers Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Dādu was a native of Ahmedabad, born in A.D. 1544. He passed away in A.D. 1603 on the top of a hill near Naraina. A fair is held there annually for a fortnight from the new moon day to the full moon day in the Hindu month of Phālguna.[5] Dādu had the ambition of uniting Hindus and Muslims under his leadership. Whether or not Dādu was a disciple of Kabīr, in his sayings he pays homage to Kabīr's greatness. He inveighs against idol-worship, vows, penance, rituals and pilgrimage. His sayings and writings, which are pithy, are collected by his disciples-Jagnnātha and Rajjab and are known as '*Haraḍe vaṇi*' and '*Angabandhu*'. These books are generally worshipped in Dādupanthi centres, which are commonly known as 'Dādu-dwārā's and not as 'Maṭha's or 'Sthāna's. Even the temple at the centre is known as Dādu-dwārā.

The philosophical outlook is monistic Vedanta. As regards the procedure, or the path, the sectarians say that it is neither Yoga nor Bhakti, but 'Sahaja', natural. The connotation of the term 'Sahaja', is rather esoteric. The sectarians seem to believe in the muttering of the word Rāma; and their prayers contain an avowal of devotion to and affection for Rāma. When pressed for further explanation they say that this Rāma is not Rāma, the son of Daśaratha but the Supreme Brahma itself. In this they resemble another sect called Rāmasanehis whom we shall characterize later.

The explanation enables them to smoothen the apparent contradiction between their rejection of idol-worship and their practice of muttering Rāma's name and offering prayers to him. But

dol-worship has conspired its own revenge. The Dādupanthis, as noted above, worship the two books of Dādu's sayings, and, like Kabīrpanthis, have gone even further. At Naraina, the place where Dādu is believed to have passed away, even his bed, his wooden sandals and some of his clothes are preserved and worshipped.[6]

Dādupanthis have three sections of which the householder one is known as 'Vistaradhāri's. The ascetics have two sections as among other sects. The fighting ones, as usual, are called Nāgās and the non-militant section, 'Virakta's. These latter go bare-headed, dressed usually in one ochre-coloured garment, and carry a waterpot of the common 'tumbā' type, gourd-like. Their names generally end in Dāsa or Śaraṇa. Those who carry on the business of the community and some others, who are not given to Yoga-Sādhanā however, wear a white garment like other Vaishnava Bairāgis There is one branch designated Khāki, and distinguished from Viraktas and Nāgās, whose members always wear a black garment. There is a new fashion in names indicating better appreciation of Advaitism which ends them in Ānanda. The one peculiarity of this sect, marking them out from all other ascetics, is that the members have neither a Mudrā, stamp on the face, nor a necklace-rosary round the neck, nor even a fore-head mark. They have very few female ascetics, and those that there are live separately or along with the males. When Dādupanthis meet, they greet one another with the word 'Sat-Rāma'.

Though inveighing against vows and fasts, Dādupanthis, whether ascetics or non-ascetics, keep 'Ekādaśī' and other Hindu fasts. They observe the festivals of Vasantapancamī, Rāmanavamī, Janmāṣṭamī, Dasarā, Divāḷi and Hoḷi. Their special feast and festival days are the birth and death anniversaries of Dādu.

Tradition records that Dādu had 152 principal disciples, of whom 100 did not establish schools. The remaining 52 established

their posts, 'Thambe'. 'Thambā' is the vernacular for Sanskri 'Stambha', meaning a 'pillar'. There are believed to be 52 Dwāraās corresponding to them and carrying on their tradition. However, in actual practice Dādupanthi ascetics are known to be divided into five branches or classes. Of these we have already mentioned the Nāgās and the Viraktas. The Uttarāḍhi, the Khālasā and the Khāki are the other three. Khālasā is not a peculiar class or a term special to the Dādupanthis. It is a designation applied to those ascetic members of a sect who belong to its original centre. In this case the ascetics of Naraina centre are called Khālasās. The Uttarāḍhi branch is a peculiarity of the Dādupanthis. It is a regional term and not a sectarian or a doctrinal one. Uttarāḍhi means Northern, that is, in this case, those of Punjab. One Banavāridāsa of Hardwar is believed to have founded this branch. Members of the Khāki branch are marked out by their black garment as well as other practices and observances. Their clothing is meagre. On the naked part of the body they besmear ashes. They wear their hair matted. In spite of the strong condemnation of bodily penance, the members of this section are known to be practising it to such an extent that one recent writer, Parashuram Chaturvedi, is led to detect Nāthapanthi influence on Dādupanthis.[7]

Dādupanthi ascetics are generally well-educated and their Pāṭhaśālās are well known. The Pāṭhaśālā at Jaipur is specially known for its cultivation of learning. One learned Sādhu of this sect, a Punjabi Jat born in A.D. 1792-93, Nishchaldāsa by name, wrote a book called *Vicāra-sāgara* in 1848. *Vicāra-sāgara* is an excellent introduction to monistic Vedanta written in Hindi. It has been translated in many Indian languages and also in English. It is believed to have been written at the express desire of Ramsinha, the King of Bundi, who was a patron of Nishchaldāsa. It is interesting to observe that the 'Vārakari' sect of Maharashtra uses this book as a primary text in its Pāṭhaśālās. Swāmi Vivekānanda is said to have declared it to be the most unique and effective book

during three centuries.[8] Nishchaladāsa died in A. D. 1862-63.

The Nāgā or the fighting section of the Dādupanthis was organized by Sundardāsa and Bhīmasimha. At present the Nāgās are organized in seven āhkāḍās. Sundardāsa has to his credit a work called *Sundar-vilāsa.* He was a direct disciple of Dādu and lived in the period A.D. 1596 to 1680. The combination of militancy with learning and respect for learning is a unique feature of the Dādupanthis. It is the connection with royalty that explains both the great regard in which the Dādupanthis were held in Rajasthan and the usual practice of Dādupanthi Nāgās to hire their martial services and be treated as regular soldiers. Wilson [9] has noticed that the Maharaja of Jaipur maintained an army of ten thousand soldiers of Dādupanthi Nāgās. Tod[10] records the happenings at a battle fought in A.D. 1752 at Merta between Bakhtasingh and Raja Ramasingh. The main scene of the strife was on the banks of the Bejpa lake. Between the rival armies stood a monastery of Dādupanthi ascetics built by Raja Sursingh, who reigned from A.D. 1595 to 1620. The shots fired by the rival armies began to fall thick on the place. All the inmates excepting the Mahanta fled in a body. The Mahanta, called Baba Kishendeva, refused to budge an inch even when the rival commanders requested him to leave, remonstrating with them that though his person was charmed against all their missiles, the building of the monastery was not. He, therefore, commanded them to withdraw. The battle was stopped for the time being and what happed when it was resumed we are not clearly informed by Tod. In another battle at Merta fought in A.D. 1756 betweeu the Marathas and the Rajputs, the inmates of the monastery risked their lives, and many lost them, in their patriotic attempt to stand by the regular Rajasthani soldiery.

The sect of Caranadāsis, famous for its ethical purity, was founded by an extraordinary man of Bania family known as Caranadāsa. He was born in A.D. 1703 at Dehara in Alwar state and

was named Ranjit. He began to preach his doctrines in 1733. Tradition records that he received his initiation from the great Puraṇic Brahmachāri Śuka.[11] According to our information, however, the spiritual preceptor of Caranadāsa was ons Sukhadeva-dāsa of Muzaffarnagar, who was believed to be an incarnation of Śuka. In any case the sect is known as Śuka-Sampradāya.

The founder is believed to have endeavoured against the corruption and demoralization that was spreading in the Vallabha-chari sect. He got both *Bhagavadgītā* and *Bhāgavata* translated; and his pupils wrote commentaries on various sections of *Bhāgavata*. He himself wrote one or two works like *Sandehasāgara*. In the book of maxims for daily use current among Carandāsis, there is one chapter giving certain passages from the Upaniṣads and an-other from *Bhāgavata*. Caranadāsa passed away in A.D. 1782. His 'samādhi', tomb, and the principal Maṭha of his sect are in Delhi. Two other centers of this sect are important. The one at Baha-durpur is a very big institution, while the other at Dehara shares with one at Delhi the honour of an annual fair. The fair at Delhi is held on Vasanta-pancamī, that is, the fifth of the bright half of Caitra, while the one at Dehara is held on the 5th of the bright half of Bhādrapada.

Caranadāsa insisted on neat and decent dress. The ascetics of this sect are unique in the selection of the colour of their garment. Formerly, they used to wear only a yellow garment; latterly, however, the female ascetics only have kept to the yellow garment, while the male ones have begun to don a white one. But they still wear a yellow cap. The rosary consists of 108 'Tulasi' beads. The tutelary deity of the sect is Rādhā-Krishna. The deceased ascetics are cremated and the bones thrown into the Ganges.

Next to their morally pure life, the sect is known for the two great female ascetic writers who were the kinsfolk, and two of the first disciples, of Caranadāsa. They are Sahajobāi and Dayābāi. Dayābāi wrote *Dayābodha* and *Vinayamālikā*. *Saha-*

japrakāśa of Sahajbāi is even a greater work and is very much loved by devout people in Northern India. She is revered by many Sādhus in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, that is, in the area where the sect of Caranadāsis prevails.

Mahanta Gulābadāsa of the Carandāsi centre at Delhi has a large library of manuscripts. Dr. Chapekar who visited the centre was pleasantly surprised to find a number of translations and commentaries on *Bhāgavata* and other Puraṇic works, in Hindi, amongst them.

There is a reformist sect called Rāmasanehi, which shows clear influence in its doctrines and observances both of the Rādhā-Krishna cult and of Jain asceticism. There are three slightly differing sects which claim this name. The three sects or rather sub-sects have their principal centres at Rena, Khedapa and Shahapura respectively, all of them being in Marwar. Their respective centres outside these original places show respect only to their respective founders. There is no common preceptor or founder who is respected or worshipped by all the three. The common features are the form of the tutelary deity and the nature of the devotee's approach to him. The tutelary deity is Rāma and the devotee's approach is through 'Sneha' or affection. So the sectarians are called Rāma-Sanehis, 'Sneha' being popularly pronounced as 'saneha'. In outward appearance, too, the sectarians are identical and are marked out from all other ascetics, Vaishnava or Śaiva. All Rāmasanehi ascetics, whether male, or female, put on pink garments. The names of all Rāmasanehi Sādhus generally end in Rāma, though sometimes they begin with Rāma. Their centres are called 'Rāmadwārā's.

The three sub-sects of Rāmasanehis are in chronological order the Rena, the Khedapa and the Shahapura. It will be noticed that the sub-sects are called after the places where the founders started their work and not after the founders themselves. The founder

of the Rena Rāmasanehi sect was one Dariyā Sāheb, who was born in Marwar at Jaitaran in A.D. 1676. He was initiated into devotional life by one Premaji, who was in the discipleship of Dādupanthis. The Rena Rāmasanehis look upon Dariyā Sāheb as Dādu's incarnation. He died in A.D. 1758.

The Khedapa sub-sect was founded by Jayamaldāsa, who was born in A.D. 1703. He was the disciple of one Rāmadāsa *alias* Harirāmadāsa of the Rāmānandi sect. Nothing much is known about Jayamaldāsa except that there is his *Vāṇī*, that is, collection of sayings, and that he died in A.D. 1753. The *Vāṇī*, or the collection, is not an object of worship; but on important occasions it is read out. The sect has a number of centres, both in Marwar and outside. The centre at Sinhathala in Marwar is so important and distinctive that it is considered to be a collateral branch, rather than a lineal descendant, of Khedapa centre. The centres at Bikaner and Jaipur are known for their good Pāṭhaśālās.

The Shahapura sub-sect, founded by Rāmacaraṇa *alias* Santarāma in A.D. 1733, has commonly come to be designated as the Rāmasanehi sect. Rāmacaraṇa was born in Jaipur state in A. D. 1719 and was named Rāmakrishna. His spiritual preceptor Kripārama belonged to the Rāmānandi sect. Rāmacaraṇa died in A.D. 1798 leaving behind a book called *Anubhavavāṇī*, 'Words of Experience'. It forms the gospel for the Shahapura section of Rāmasanehis. It is not only read out or repeated but actually worshipped like the Grantha Saheb of the Sikhs.

The ascetics of this sub-sect wear a necklace rosary of beads of either Tulasi or sandal-wood. There are two kinds of ascetics: Mauni and Bandihi. Mauni means one who keeps silence. Bandihi is the vernacular of Sanskrit 'Videhi' and hence means bodiless. Their bodilessness refers to their ignoring the existence of the body; and they demonstrate it by wearing only a strip of cloth for the privities. The Maunis keep silence for twelve years. During this

period they live only on milk and are continuously engaged in meditatian. They always wear black garments, like the Khāki section of the Dādupanthis.

The Rāmasanehis, as stated above, are so-called because they have affection for Rāma. But theoretically they are against idol-worship. As in the case of Dādupanthis, their Rāma, therefore, is the same as the attributeless, formless Brahma and not the human being who was the son of King Daśaratha. This rationalization is very thin. Their theory and practice regarding both the muttering of the name Rāma and the ritual of worship imply nothing but anthropomorphic Deity. First as already stated, every place of worship of theirs is called a Rāmadwārā, that is a place where Rāma is installed or in some way concretized. They offer prayers at the spot where a picture of the founder of the sub-sect is kept. Thus in the centres of Rena, Khedapa and Shahapura sub-sects, are kept the pictures of Dariyā-sāheb, Jayamaldāsa and Rāmacaraṇa respectively. In the centres of the Shahapura sub-sect, in addition to the picture of Rāmacaraṇa, his book called *Anubhavavāṇi* is also installed for worship. Common worship is offered at the place three times a day. The form of the prayer and the accompanying ritual are exactly identical with those of Hindu idol-worshippers. And the objects of prayer, namely the preceptor's picture and the book, are referred to at the time as Bhagawān, Divinity. About the muttering of the name of Rāma, in which they have great faith, they have a theory which shows the influence both of the 'Yoga' school and perhaps, the 'rasa' or the flavour theory of Caitanyaites. They insist that the flavour created by the muttering of the name Rāma must not stop only at the tongue but must descend down through the heart and the navel to the 'Kuṇḍalini'-centre about the prostrate gland and must rise upto the 'Trikuṭi', that is, to the pineal gland in the head. It is only then that the devotee enjoys endless happiness. As pointed out elsewhere, idol-worship has a curious knack of taking its revenge. In this case, it has gone a step further. Not only do the sectarians proclaim that they are

not against idol-worship, but they also try to demonstrate with appropriate or inappropriate quotations from their old writings that they have never been against it.

Rāmasanehi ascetics have to stay at their centres during the four months of the monsoon or rather the four months of Vishnu's sleep. During these months there is usually, in addition to the common prayer and individual meditation, reading of the *Vāṇī* and its exposition with the help of Puranic and other stories. The ascetics are not expected to eat onion and garlic during this period. Yet they do not throw these things away if they get them per-chance in their alms. Many of them observe such rules as taking only one meal a day or subsisting on milk alone or fruits alone.

Their most important festivals are two, out of which one is common to all the three sub-sects and the other is specific to each. At the centres of the Rena, the Khedapa and the Shahapura sub-sects the birth-anniversary of the founders is celebrated with eclat. The common festival is known as Phulḍola. We have been unable to get an explanation of this name. Its object is very laudable. It has been intended to counteract the obscenity and licence characteristic of the Holi festival. It appropriately begins on the 11th day of the bright half of Phālguna and continues unreasonably long after the conclusion of the Holi, its total duration being forty days. This period is also important in connection with the famous Puranic episode of the rescue of Pralhāda by Vishnu in his man-lion incarnation. This episode forms the topic for a number of lectures. Sayings of the founder-preceptor are read out every day and the whole is concluded with a good meal. We have not been able to get any more detailed programme for counteracting the licence and obscenity characteristic of the Holi. It is quite clear that the reading of the sayings of the founder-preceptor can attract only or mostly the sectarian followers. Lectures on the Pralhāda episode, however, can and do attract a large number of non-sectarians. It is noteworthy that the lecturing on Pralhāda episode is generally done by

professional Śāstris who are non-sectarian. The very sound of the singing of religious prayers in the midst of the town acts as a deterrent at least to the more sober and moral section of the populace.

We have observed above that the Rāmasanehi sect is influenced to some extent by the Rādhā cult. Its very name announces the fact that the devotee, according to the sectarian doctrine, must pour his love at the feet of the Deity. The very phraseology they use to express the relationship between the Rāmasanehi ascetic and the Deity betrays the influence of the Rādhā cult. The Sādhu or the devotee is asked to love the Deity as the cowherdesses loved Krishna or as a wife loves her husband. This does not remain a mere exhortation. It is translated into overt practice. When an ascetic proceeds to the place of worship or has formally to go in the presence of the chief Mahanta of the principal centre, he has to draw over his head a pink-coloured piece of cloth exactly in the manner in which a north-Indian female wears her 'sāri', thus simulating wifely behaviour. Another feature, too, reveals influence of Vallabhachāri sect. The Rāmasanehis attach great importance to their religious preceptors. So much is this the case that a preceptor's clothes, his hair, or the clippings of his nails can deputize for him in his absence and receive the usual homage. Of course, the Rāmasanehi ascetics deny this but we see no valid objection to the statement made by Parashuram Chaturvedi in that behalf. Similarly Chaturvedi has observed that among the laity females look upon their religious preceptors as something more than even their husbands.[12] This, too, the sectarians deny. It only means that some of the intelligent Sādhus among the Rāmasanehis have begun to realize that some of their sectarian practices are not creditable to their sect.

Another source of influence, as already pointed out, is Jain asceticism. Rāmasanehi ascetics generally are seen walking very warily lest they should happen to crush some vermin under their

feet. Not only do they drink water after straining through a piece of cloth but also they commonly avoid drinking water at night. Like the Jains and for similar reasons they take their evening meals before sun-down. During the monsoon months, they are very loath to stir out, being afraid of killing some vermin which abound in that season. The principal head of the chief centre is not only called an Ācārya like the Jain chief but also like him carries a bundle of peacock feathers.

The Shahapura sub-sect is known among the sectarians as the 'Tyāgi', 'Renunciator,' while the Rena and Khedapa ones are looked upon as 'Rājayogi' or the 'Royal yogi'. The Shahapura sect does not admit female ascetics. The other two not only admit them but allow them to live with the males. Female ascetics wear pink 'sari's. The Khedapa centre at Ratlam presented a scene justifying the title of Rājayogi given to it. Not only were there some ascetics dressed in white but there were others whose dress so much resembled that of a householder that Dr. Chapekar, who visited the place, could not recognize them as ascetics. The Shahapura ascetics do not cook any food but live on whatever is given to them by way of alms. The Rena and the Khedapa ones do not mind cooking their own food.

When Rāmasanehis meet they fold their hands in the usual way and greet each other with the words 'Rāmaji Rāma Rāma'.

Another book-worshipping sect is that of Garībadāsis. It was founded by one Garībadāsa, who was born at Chhudani in Rohatak district of Punjab in the year A.D. 1717. Garībadāsa claimed that he received inspiration from Kabīr in his dream. Almost a century earlier the Maharashtrian saint-poet Tukārāma claimed similar inspiration from and avowed discipleship of Keśava Caitanya, who had passed away 68 years before that event. The time-gap between Garībadāsa and Kabīr is very much larger. Kabīr had died not less than two centuries before the birth of Garībadāsa. Garībadāsa, like Tukārāma, was a house-holder and the sect that he started was a house-holder's sect. Tukārāma did not start any sect or school.

Whatever the source of Garībadāsa's inspiration, his preaching captured the public imagination. Not only did he preach but he also wrote expounding all the usual topics of religious significance like Karma-Activity, Yoga-Application, Jnāna-Knowledge and Bhakti-Devotion. His sayings and writings have been collected in three books named *Anahad, Ratnasāgara* and *Navaratnamālā*. His centres at Chhudani and other places were known as 'Ḍerā's, habitations. The sect being a house-holders' one the Mahantas of these centres were also house-holders.

Swāmi Dayāludāsa, who was sixth in the apostolic succession from Garībadāsa, and whose activity thus must be assigned to the second quarter of the nineteenth century, fundamentally changed the sect. He first instituted asceticism, whether the entrant was just a Brahmachāri or whether he was a Samnyāsi of the fourth āśrama. He called his centres 'Āśrama's, a word indicating revivalist influence. And the temple was called Gurudwāra. He even changed the law of inheritance of the Chhudani centre. He required even a descendant of Garībadāsa aspiring for Mahantahood of the Chhudani centre to remain celibate.

The sect has about 125 centres spread over, principally, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. We are informed that at present the ascetic strength of the sect is about six hundred. The occupant of the 'Gādi' at Chhudani is alone entitled to be known as Śrī Mahanta.

We have already described at least one sect which started in reaction against the demoralizing influence of some developments in the Vallabhachāri sect. The Swāminārāyaṇa sect registers another and a stronger protest against these developments. It was founded by one Sahajānanda, who was born at Chhapaiyya near Ayodhya in A.D. 1781. He was named Ghanaśyāma. In A.D. 1800 at Pipalana centre of the Rāmānujis he received ordination at the hands of the Mahanta of the centre, Rāmānanda. He was given the ascetic name of Nārāyaṇamuni. In A.D. 1801

he was installed as the Mahanta of the Rāmānuji centre at Jetpur in Saurashtra. Very soon thereafter he started his sect whose basic philosophy is the Vedānta of qualified dualism of the Rāmānuji sect. He wrote one book called *Śikṣāpatri* for the guidance of the sect. The principal doctrines of it are Ahimsā and Varṇāśrama Dharma. His sayings were collected in a book called *Vacanāmṛta*. He relinquished his material body in A.D. 1829.[13]

Swāmi Nārāyaṇa is believed to have accepted as lay disciples about two hundred and fifty Khoja families. Swāmi Nārāyaṇa's religious preceptor Rāmānanda was believed to be an incarnation of Uddhava, the cousin-friend of Krishna. The sect, therefore is known as Uddhavipantha. Its followers are principally found in Kaccha, Saurashtra, Gujarat and sporadically in Khandesh. It has two main centres, both in Gujarat. One is situated at Ahmedabad and the other at Vartala in Kheda district. At both these places Swāmi Nārāyaṇa himself had installed two of his nephews as Ācāryas. And the office of Ācāryahood still continues in these places in their lines. Though the Ācāryahood thus appears to be almost hereditary, the Sādhus of the centre have a right to decide in extraordinary circumstances. About twenty-five years back, as the then Ācārya of Vartala centre was found guilty of misconduct the Sādhus of the place deposing him raised to the Ācāryahood the next rightful claimant.

These Ācāryas are different in their life-pattern from the Ācāryas of the Rāmasanehi sect and resemble more those of the Vallabhachāri sect. They live in a palatial building by themselves away from the Mandira or the ascetic centre. The Swāminārāyaṇa temple of Ahmedabad, which is the ascetic centre of the sect and which harboured about three hundred Sādhus at the time Dr. Chapekar visited the place, is situated in the heart of Ahmedabad and has its own ascetic Mahanta. It is a magnificent and spacious temple with a very capacious compound. Not far from it is situated a comparatively small place wherein the female ascetics of the sect are housed. This place of residence of female ascetics, wherever a

distinct one like this is provided, is called Havelī. There are regulations prescribing the hours when female ascetics may visit the temple and offer worship to the idol.

Swāminārāyaṇa temples are of two kinds. Those in which an idol of Krishna in some form is installed are called Śikharabanda, while those in which there is only a picture of Krishna are called Harimandira. We are informed that the sect at present has a strength of about one hundred and fifty thousand followers. A large number of them belong to the Koli caste. We are happy to record the information that the preaching of Swāminārāyaṇa sect has raised the moral tone of the Kolis of Saurashtra and Gujarat.

Though Krishna is their tutelary deity, there is no objection to worship Pancāyatana or the combination of five deities. Dwaraka forms their chief place of pilgrimage. One need not quarrel with them when they describe themselves as Satsaṅgi, 'well-companioned', but one naturally feels sorry to note that they describe other sectarians as Kusaṅgi, 'evil-companioned'.

They observe all the Ekādaśi fasts and the Harijayantī fasts too. Harijayantī is the 9th day of every bright fortnight. In addition, Krishna's 9th as well as Śivarātri are observed as fasts. In the four months of monsoon they observe vows like taking one meal only, either in the morning or in the evening. They celebrate the feast of Annakūṭa either on the dark 15th of Aśvina or the bright 15th of Kārtika. It is at this time only that the ascetics indulge in rich food.

There are three kinds of ascetics in the Swāminārāyaṇa sect besides the female ones. Formerly the ascetics were ordained only on the Rāma's 9th but now-a-days they can be and are initiated on any of the Ekādaśi days. Female ascetics are ordained by the wife of the Ācārya. Neither the male Ācārya nor any male ascetic is authorized to do so. This rule being strictly observed, the moral reputation of the Ācāryas and the Mahantas of the sect stands

very high. The three kinds of ascetics are known as (i) Brahmacāris, (ii) Sādhus and (iii) Pāḷes. The first kind is recruited from among the Brahmins. Sādhus are those non-Brahmins who have given up fish and meat in their diet. Pāḷes are non-Brahmin ascetics who have not given up meat and fish. Of course, though Pāḷes like to eat meat and fish they cannot get it in the common centres of the Swāminārāyaṇa temples. They are externally distinguished from other ascetics of the Swāminārāyaṇa sect by their white garment. Brahmacāris and Sādhus are dressed in ochre-coloured garments. The Swāminārāyaṇa centres like that of Ahmedabad have fairly large income from rent, and yet one discovers with pain their anxiousness to go after Bheṭapūjā, 'honorific gifts' very assiduously. Thus the Ācārya and the Mahanta show particular regard towards those followers who bring large honorific gifts. It is common knowledge that the Prasāda or the benedictory gift offered to the devotee by the Ācārya or the Mahanta is very strictly proportional to the size and quality of the honorific gifts brought by the followers. The Swāminārāyaṇis with all the reformist zeal of the founder did not like the Temple Entry Act. To escape the operation of the clause throwing open Hindu temples to untouchable classes, or scheduled castes as they are formally discribed, the Swāminārāyaṇa sect declared itself to be non-Hindu. The declaration had deleterious effect on the flow of honorific gifts to their centres. We are informed that the Ācāryas and Mahantas soon saw reason to recant in order to attract the usual honorific gifts to their centres. This rather commercial attitude towards honorific gifts and lay followers is partially at least the consequence of the Ācāryas of the sect being householders.

Sadhus of Miscellaneous Sects

We shall now briefly deal with some sects, properly so called, and some other traditions that cannot be strictly described as sects, which were started as separate schools in some spirit of reform – but are not definitely aligned with any of the well-known Sādhu orders, whether Śaiva or Vaishnava. Most of them have not only a rather small following but also their ascetic quota is almost insignificant. Even that insignificant ascetic quota has tended to be represented by individuals rather than by groups and monastic centres.

The most important of such sects is the Vīraśaiva or Lingāyata sect of Karnatak. It was started, or rather rejuvenated by Basava in the 12th century A.D.[1] Vīraśaivas or Lingāyatas have an ascetic order called Jangama whose members act as their priests and are otherwise called Acāryas. Within them there is a further distinction between those who are known as 'Viraktas' (passionless) or 'Nirabhāris' (burdenless), who do not maintain a convent (maṭha) and other Jangamas who are also ascetics but keep convents and superintend the religious well-being of their followers. Nandimath[2] informs us that these latter are called Pattadadevaru or Viśeṣas. The chief 'Maṭha' of the sect is at Chitaldurg in Mysore territory. There are besides other centres too, five[3] of them being considered as the principal establishments. Most of the maṭhas have maintained hostels for students taking secondary or collegiate education. Many of them manage colleges. The activities of the reformist Navakalyāṇa maṭha of Dharwar may be particularly mentioned. Besides the heads of 'maṭhas' and 'Viraktas', there are

householder Jangamas who form the bulk of the priesthood of the Vīraśaivas. Under the circumstances, the number of ascetics is naturally limited. The sect considers itself as absolutely un-Brahmanic, and there is no question of its ascetics joining in the Kumbha assemblage.

If Basava worked in Karnatak in the 12th century, Govindaprabhu of Riddhipur in Berar, born in A.D. 1188, and his disciple Cakradhara, born six years after him, between them founded a sect in Maharashtra called Mahānubhāva in A.D. 1268. Cakradhara is believed to have been ordained into asceticism at Paiṭhan. He is clearly senior to Jnāneśvara at least by a whole generation and junior to Nimbārka by a whole generation. These three famous ascetics associated with Paiṭhan follow one another in succession as Nimbārka, Cakradhara and Jnāneśvara. The Mahānubhāva sect was reformist in more ways than one. First of all, the sect did not countenance idol-worship. Second, not only the sect but even its ascetic section was open to members of all the four castes both male and female. The sect, though non-idol-worshipping, looks upon Krishna as God's incarnation and some of its early books are nothing but descriptions of Krishna's boyhood and youth. In addition they not only recognize Dattātreya as an incarnation of God but also maintain that Cakradhara exhorted his followers to worship Dattātreya in his one-mouthed and four-handed form. It should be noted that though Dattātreya is treated as a kind of tutelary deity by Śaiva ascetics in northern India, yet temples dedicated to him and his regular worship in them are confined to Maharashtra and a part of Karnatak. There is no trace of Dattātreya worship in Maharashtra before the rise of the Mahānubhāva sect. The famous Janārdanaswāmi, the spiritual preceptor of the saint-poet Ekanātha, who popularized Dattātreya worship in Maharashtra, contemplated him in his three-mouthed and six-handed form. Besides these deities the Mahānubhāva sect looks upon its three founder-teachers Cakrapāṇi, Govindaprabhu and Cakradhara as incarnations of God. The sect is also known as Jayakrishnīya, Acyuta or Mahātmā sect. [4]

It has an ascetic section, we are told, but repeated enquiries about the monastic centres have failed to elicit any information regarding its strength. We are inclined to think that it is very insignificant. Though the sect considers itself Vedic, its ascetics are not known to be joining in the Kumbha assemblage. The sect was held in light esteem and not only disliked but hated to some extent in Maharashtra for a long time since its foundation. We find the echoes of these sentiments in the writings of even Ekanātha, the most genteel and tolerant of saint-poets of Maharashtra. He informs his readers that the Mānabhāva (Mahānubhāva) puts on black garments, holds his staff upside down and beguiles widows and children. He further tells us that the Mānabhāvas repeat the name of Krishna and are prepared to melt idols of deities made of precious metal, which they use for their own gains. He hints at some of their practices as being immoral in so far as they recognized no distinctions in free dalliance. Further he disapprovingly speaks of their practice of complete tonsure and, referring to certain of their practices designed to catch the public eye, plainly asserts that they did not follow their own precepts regarding the inviolability of property and women. He also states that whenever some misfortune beset a Mānabhāva, he immediately took to black magic. Even ordinarily, he asserts, they used to practise Śāktism in the month of Āśvin, though during the rest of the year, they might recite *Bhagavadgītā* and *Jnāneśvari.*[5] Altogether he thought them to be a danger to spiritual health.

In another connection we have observed that between Rāmānanda and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī no important ascetic is known to have lived at Banaras, nor any ascetic scholar known to have made any contributions to knowledge from that centre. We have also observed that literary activity of Banaras became prominent about the beginning of the 16th century with the settlement there of the Maharashtrian Brahmin Rāmeśvarabhaṭṭa. From the preceptorial tradition about Rāmānanda it was clear that ascetics of the Rāmānuji sect had a live centre of their own at Banaras from before the

beginning of the 14th century. From the account of Jnāneśvara's life we know that persons intending to get ordained as ascetics (Samnyāsis) used to go to Banaras for that purpose from before the middle of the 13th century. This connection of Maharashtrian Śaiva asceticism with Banaras was continued in the following centuries. The Maharashtrian ascetic Nṛsimha Sarasvatī, to whom is attributed the promulgation of the worship of the ascetic deity Dattātreya in Maharashtra and who relinquished his body in A.D. 1458, is traditionally known to have been ordained into the Dasanāmi asceticism of the Sarasvatī order by one Krishna Sarasvatī of Banaras.

Rāmeśvarabhaṭṭa, the Maharashtrian Brahmin, who settled in Banaras in A.D. 1513, not only enlivened its intellectual life but also started an ascetic line of the Sarasvatī order through his disciples, which culminated in the philosophico-religious contributions of the great ascetic Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī was the spiritual disciple of Mādhava Sarasvatī, who, according to one account was a direct disciple of Rāmeśvarabhaṭṭa, and, according to another account, was the spiritual disciple of one Gangādhara Sarasvatī. It is this Gangādhara Sarasvatī, perhaps, who was the contemporary and disciple of Nṛsimha Sarasvatī in Maharashtra. If the spiritual preceptor of Mādhava Sarasvatī is correctly identified with Sarasvatī Gangādhara, who is known to have lived in Maharashtra after the middle of the 15th century, then there arises a discrepancy about dates. If on the other hand, Mādhava Sarasvatī along with another ascetic Dāmodara Sarasvatī, who also figures among the disciples of Rameśvarabhaṭṭa, is accepted as a disciple of Rameśvarabhaṭṭa, then the dates fit properly. Of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's disciples two are known by name. One is Balabhadra and the other is Purushottama Sarasvatī. Jnānendra Sarasvatī of Banaras, who ordained into asceticism, before A.D. 1690, Brahmendraswāmi Dhāvadśikar, could be a contemporary of this Purushottama Sarasvatī. Whether he was in the pupillary line of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī or in the much older line of Krishna

Sarasvatī, it is not possible to ascertain. It is clear, however, that Dasanāmi Samnyāsis of the Sarasvatī order began to figure in Maharashtra now and then about the beginning of the 15th century. They not only vitalized religious life but some of them also influenced contemporary politics.

One ascetic of the Sarasvatī order is known to have lived in Maharashtra in the first quarter of the 19th century. He was called Avadhūta Jnānasāgarendra Sarasvatī or simply as Bhairava Avadhūta Jnānasāgara. He was a worshipper of Dattātreya, which explains the title Avadhūta in his name, and is described as the spiritual disciple of Shivājī Caitanya. How he came to be called Sarasvatī is not explained in this traditional account. As we shall presently see there was another school of asceticism of the fourth stage ascetics, the names of whose members ended in the word Caitanya. For the sake of convenience, we may describe it as the Caitanya school. The preceptorial and pupillary succession of this school begins with one Śiva Caitanya[6] and, to the knowledge of historians, ends with one Mādhavadāsa and Vāgho Caitanya. Mādhavadāsa wrote on *Bhāgavata* and is known to have been born in A.D. 1721. There seems to be another line not recorded by Bhave in the foregoing account. Ajagaonkar[7] gives it;and it is in this line that both Sivājī Caitanya and Bhairava Jnānasāgarendra appear.

It is clear from this account that Sarasvatī ascetics of Maharashtra figuring from time to time were individuals not trained or ordained in any monastic centre of their own in Maharashtra. They lived and worked as individuals without any organization behind them. We shall further see that this practice of individual ascetics working by themselves was and has been almost a tradition of Maharashtra. The one exception to this tradition is formed by Rāmadāsa. He strove to found a number of ascetic centres and to start a distinct school of asceticism. But we know that even his partial success was only short-lived. The vicissitudes of the Rāma-

dāsi sect, thus, corroborate our contention that individual ascetics working by themselves from the time of Jnāneśvara onwards is the proper tradition of Maharashtra.

There is at present an illustrious representative of the Sarasvatī order of ascetics in the person of Kevalānanda, who recently figured so prominently in the resuscitation of the ancient and great temple of Somanātha in Saurashtra. He was a life-long celibate even before his ordination as a Sarasvatī ascetic at the hands of Prajnānanda Sarasvatī, associated with the great monastic centre of Śṛngeri.* In between Jnānasāgarendra Sarasvatī, who wrote two religio-philosophical books in Marathi, and Kevalānanda Sarasvatī, who as Nārāyaṇaśāstri Marathe founded and developed the educational institute of 'Prājnapāṭhaśālā' at Wai, there is no Maharashtrian link known to us or to Kevalānanda Sarasvatī himself. True to Maharashtrian tradition, Kevalānanda as a Samnyāsi has been working by himself without any ascetic or non-ascetic organization behind him.

In the intervening period there have been a number of ascetics, duly ordained or not, who have been working as individuals, each one with a fairly large following. Their contribution to the philosophico-religious literature is not known and may be taken to be nothing; and their contribution to the prestige of the ascetic tradition is doubtful. One among such was Rāmabhāratī Akkalkoṭkar, otherwise known as Cancala Bhāratī. As his name indicates, he was an ascetic of the Bhāratī order, which is not represented among the well-known ascetics of Maharashtra. He was greatly influential in his time and relinquished his body in A.D. 1878.

Leaving aside these stray and exotic ascetics we shall turn to two ascetic traditions which show a fairly long continuity. The tradition, followers of which always had Caitanya as a suffix to their

* Anandagiri in his *Sankaravijaya* (LXII) explicitly states and Vidyaranya in his *Sankaradigvijaya* (XII, 64-69) suggests that the Order of ascetics placed in charge of Srngeri was Bharati.

name, is decidedly old. The traditional account of the Caitanya ascetics traces the origin of the school to Datta whose disciple was one Śiva Caitanya. Leaving aside Datta, who is of course brought into the tradition according to the usual custom of tracing the origin of a school to a deity or to a deified ancient ascetic, the Caitanya tradition begins with Śiva Caitanya. In the traditional account, the preceptorial succession places two personages Gopāḷa Caitanya and Ātmārāma Caitanya in succession between Śiva Caitanya on the one hand and Rāghava Caitanya and Keśava Caitanya on the other. Keśava Caitanya, after the birth of a son to him in A.D. 1551, got himself ordained into asceticism at the hands of Rāghava Caitanya. He died in A.D. 1572. Siva Caitanya is, therefore, referable to not earlier than the last quarter of the 15th century. One tradition represents Rāghava Caitanya as having settled at Girinar and to have returned to Maharashtra only after Muslim persecution in that region. It is possible that Rāghava Caitanya, who along with another ascetic Tulasī Caitanya is represented as a disciple of Ātmārāma Caitanya, had gone to Girinar because of the fame of the Datta-site there. The pupillary line of Rāghava Caitanya and Keśava Caitanya ended with Tukārām, who was a householder till his death. From the fact that Tukārām never adopted the name of Caitanya, we may conclude that all those teachers and disciples in this tradition who adopted Caitanya suffix were ascetics. The ascetic line in the discipleship of Tulasī Caitanya, having continued for a long time, seems to have ended with Vāgho Caitanya, whom we have reason to place not later than the middle of the 18th century.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the great Caitanya of Bengal during his tour of pilgrimage was in Maharashtra about the year A.D. 1510 and is known to have visited Pandharpur.[8] Kshitimohan Sen[9] observes: "Some people believe that Tukārām had intercourse with the Vaishnavas of the Bengal school, for his guru was Keshav Caitanya or Babaji Caitanya", and comments that no sound conclusion can be drawn from the mere similarity of names.

S. K. De[10], however, writing later in 1942, is not so guarded about Tukārām's indebtedness to Caitanyaite school. He observes: "It is probable also that he (Caitanya) left behind some general influence in the Maratha country, which survived, as it did, through a century to the days of Tukārām, who acknowledges his debt to Caitanya teachers." In view of the chronological sequences we have established and in view of the tradition representing Śiva Caitanya as having no human preceptor, we conclude that the school owes its inspiration and spiritual allegiance to Caitanya, Lord Gauranga, of Bengal.

There was yet another school of asceticism in Maharashtra, the followers of which assumed names ending in Ānanda. The earliest of them whom we have been able to trace appears to be one Sahajānanda, the preceptor of Pūrṇānanda whose period is known to be A.D. 1578–1628. Pūrṇānanda is known by his work *Śiva-Pārvati-Pariṇaya*. Pūrṇānanda apparently had a disciple, Cidānanda by name, who is known because his preceptor is said to have written the work *Avadhūtagītā* for him. It is clear that Cidānanda had no blood relationship with Pūrṇānanda. Pūrṇānanda had three other disciples, namely Nijānāndaswāmi, Śivarāmaswāmi and Acyutāśrama. Acyutāśrama was a poet and a contemporary of Ekanātha. Śivarāmaswāmi is assigned to the second quarter of the 18th century and yet is said to be the son of this Pūrṇānanda. This tradition does not seem to be correct because Pūrṇānanda is known to have died in A.D. 1628. It might be taken to indicate that Pūrṇānanda was first a householder and became an ascetic only of the fourth stage. The father of Nijānandaswāmi is not known. But tradition asserts that Nijānandaswāmi, whose former name was Gopāla, was also an ascetic of the fourth stage. His son was Ranganāthaswāmi. Ranganāthaswāmi, who figures as one of the five who formed Rāmadāsa's inner circle, bore the surname Nigadikar and was born in 1612 and died in 1684.

There was another Ranganātha whose surname was Mogarekar.

He wrote works on the standard subjects of his time in the first decade of the 17th century. It is not known whether he was an ascetic, but the preceptorial tradition in which he was a disciple is known. His immediate preceptor was one Krishnānanda, who was preceded by three Ānanda preceptors, Vaikuṇṭhānanda, Paramānanda and Vāsudevānanda. Vāsudevānanda was also known as Siddhānanda. No further information about them is available. But we may deduce from this preceptorial tradition that Vāsudevānanda alias Siddhānanda lived about the beginning of the 16th century.

There was an ascetic named Śivānandaswāmi who, according to the information recorded by Krishna Dayārṇava (A.D. 1674–1740) in his works, was a sort of a Guru to Shivaji who had installed him at his capital fort at Raygada. There, one Govinda accepted his discipleship and became an ascetic of the fourth stage. Krishna Dayārṇava, who collaborated with the great Marathi polymath Śrīdhara to write a Marathi commentary on the tenth chapter of *Bhāgavata*, was a son of this Govinda. It seems that he, too, had taken Samnyāsa in his later life.

Śrīdharaswāmi, the great Marathi polymath whose renderings of *Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and Bhāgavata* have been popular for nearly two centuries was also an ascetic of the fourth stage, his ascetic name being Kāntānanda. His spiritual preceptor was his father, who was also an ascetic of the fourth stage and was known as Brahmānanda. Śrīdhara's great contemporary ascetic was one Ātmārāmaswāmi Sindakhedkar of Khandesh. Like Śrīdhara he, too, accepted asceticism in the fouth stage. He was ordained by one Nirmalānanda Paramahamsa and became known as Ātmārāma Paramahamsa. He seems to have been a versatile linguist and writer. Not only did he write on Śiva and the Śaiva sect, to which he formally belonged, but also on Yoga and Vedanta. He wrote something for the Lingāyata Jangamas and even on Muslim prayers. The mediums that he used were

Persian, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi and Gondi. His disciple was one Sadānanda Paramahamsa. Sadānanda, who was born in A.D. 1664, after a successful official life and after having produced a number of Marathi works not only on the religious topics of Vedanta and Bhakti but also on geography and culinary art, is believed to have died sometime after A.D. 1729.

Ātmārāma Paramahamsa was a unique personality. He represents the Maharashtrian counterpart of Kabir. He believed in a synthesis of Hinduism and Islam and in the assimilation of the Hindus and the Muslims into a unity. He named his tutelary deity Shaha Datta. The date of his birth is not known. He was well known in Khandesh by A.D. 1678 and relinquished his body in A.D. 1731. It speaks volumes for the work of Nṛsimha Sarasvatī and others, who introduced Dattātreya as a tutelary deity in Maharashtra, that this Śaiva ascetic as a Paramahamsa not only adopted Datta as his tutelary deity but tended to live after the pattern of Dattātreya's description as a Paramahamsa, namely in the state of an infatuated child.

The ascetics who adopted Datta as their tutelary deity, whether they were formally of a new school or of the older Śaiva school, may be said to have belonged to a distinctive Maharashtrian school of asceticism. But the really distinct school is represented by Rāmadāsa of whom we have already spoken. He seems to have been the only one of Maharashtrian ascetics who attempted to found a school. To that end he is known to have established fourteen monastic centres. His attempt, however, does not seem to have borne fruit.

We shall leave this topic of Maharashtrian asceticism after noticing one more school, which socially speaking is the most important one. There lived one Maunibāvā who relinquished his body in A.D. 1686. Shivaji was devoted to him and is known to have called on him in A. D. 1676. His full name is not known, but he seems to have been a Śaiva ascetic of the Giri order, for his

disciples had names ending in Giri. One of them was Turu Giri. This Turu Giri is believed to be a Maratha by caste who had taken to Samnyāsa. It seems Maunibāvā was made the Rajaguru by Shivaji's son Sambhaji. At least it is recorded that Sambhaji raised Turu Giri to the throne of Maunibāvā.[11] The present Kṣātrajagadguru of Kolhapur is the head of the monastic centre of Maunibāvā today.

One ascetic sect of northern India, specially prominent in North-west India, arising out of the Rāmānandi tradition, which could not be described earlier owing to its lack of specific affiliation, deserves to be noticed. It is known as the Nirīkāri sect and was founded by Bābā Sarjudāsa who is believed to have relinquished his body in about A.D. 1800. His religious preceptor Bābā Nārāyaṇadāsa was a Rāmānandi Nāgā of the Nirvāṇi Ākhāḍa. Its principal centre is at Patiala and its centres and activities are mainly in Punjab, Pepsu and the North-western part of Uttar Pradesh. It has a Nāgā, naked or militant section. The Maharaja of Patiala is an official adviser in the election of the abbot of the centre at Patiala. The ascetics of the centre are rather eclectic about the colour of their garment. It may be ochre-coloured, pink or even white. Their rosary-necklace may be of sandal, Tulasī or Rudrākṣa. Their names end in Dāsa, Śaraṇa, Prakāśa, Deva, or Ānanda. Their tutelary deity is the combination of five gods. Yet the sect is known to be Vaishnava. It believes in monistic Vedanta and traces its tradition to Sanatkumāra. When two sectarian ascetics meet they greet each other with the formula 'Sat Nirīkāra'. The expression 'Sat Nirīkāra' is the same as 'Sat Nirākāra' which means 'Formless Being'. The authoritative texts of the sect are *Bhagavadgītā, Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, Bhāgavata* and the founder Sarjudāsa's sayings.

Another sect that deserves mention here is the Kuberasaheb alias Kāyama sect. It is more popularly known as the Satkaivala sect. It was started by one Karuṇāsāgara, who was born in A.D.

1772, and relinquished his body in A.D. 1877. He was a great writer; and eighteen books are ascribed to him. The principal centre of the sect is at Sarasa near Ananda in Gujarat. It has much in common with the Kabir sect from which it is believed to have branched off. Kuberapanthis are now trying to prove themselves to be an independent sect. The followers of this sect are at present confined to Gujarat. They do not keep idols but offer their 'Arati' and 'Bhoga' and do their meditation in front of a picture of Karuṇāsāgara, the founder. They wear white clothes and use rosary of Tulsi beads. They do not admit females to their order. They maintain a well-conducted Sanskrit Pāṭhaśālā at their chief centre at Sarasa.

Conclusion

Sadhuism began as individual asceticism and has developed into a religio-social institution. During its long history it has produced a number of outstanding personalities. It would have been surprising if among them some had not behaved contrary to the principles of their order. Some even abused their prestige and power in a manner which tended to demoralize society. There have been and there are a fair number among the rank and file of Sādhus, whose conduct is far from ennobling and approximates to that of the importunate type of beggars. There have been some, and perhaps there are some even to-day, who have terrorized the people. But it would be wrong to assert, as some have done, that the generality of Sādhus is attracted to Sadhuism as a convenient profession and a decent cloak for indolence.

A very large number of Sādhus live as inmates of some monastic centre or the other. As described previously their life at these centres is generally one of self-control and discipline. The daily routine prescribes a course of religious observances for physical purity, mutterings and readings of sacred texts for mental elevation, communal prayers for group ecstasy, and preaching for the religious benefit of the lay public. Almost every sect maintains at least one educational institution where novitiates and others are instructed in Sanskrit and in the basic sacred texts of the sect. Quite a number of them are initiated into the technique of Yoga and keep it up as a life-long practice for mental purity. Most of those who are on the move and therefore are sometimes seen going from door to door for alms are on their mission of a round-the-holy-places pilgrimage.

At the monastic centres, the daily routine provides for two simple meals, each one consisting of two items, namely bread and 'dāl', and occasionally of a third one of vegetables. Milk and milk-

products even when available are hardly ever used. In one centre where there was a large number of milch cattle, it was discovered that the cows were normally not milked. Even though the institutions provide two meals, there are a fair number of Sādhus at every one of them who content themselves only with one meal. There are not more than half a dozen festivals in a year when Sādhus enjoy a feast. Among such occasions the 'Annakūṭa' of the Vaishnavas coming in Divāli is the most notable. It is thus seen that the life of a Sādhu is always above starvation but not one of abundance, much less of surfeit.

The main source of income of the sects and their monastic centres is at present the honorific offerings (Bheṭapūjā), which are made by their lay followers, and the income that accrues from the landed possessions of a centre or its temple or of both. Quite a number of abbots of principal centres carry on money-lending business too. And they have to do it because the responsibility for the maintenance and well-being of the inmates, for the continuance of educational and charitable activities and for maintenance of general prestige, lies on the abbot. He has, therefore, to be very careful about the management of the funds. If he is influential and well-known, he is able to attract not only larger honorific gifts, but also special donations. Some of the centres derive as large an income as rupees one lakh a year. On the whole even such large incomes are properly utilized. In the past such influential abbots secured free lands for their centres from the rulers of the country. Quite a number of the centres, especially those located in cities, own buildings erected by the past abbots the rents of which bring a fair amount of assured income. There is still in the country an abundance of that mentality which not only admires outstanding ascetics but feels it to be its bounden duty and proud privilege to make very substantial honorific offerings to them.

It has been impossible to make a statistically satisfying survey of the reasons and motives that impel individuals to renounce ordinary life in favour of asceticism. The urge of religious duty does

not come in the picture here. For asceticism as a religious duty pertains only to one's old age. And among the Sādhus that one comes across, whether inmates of monastic centres or wandering ones, there are hardly any who have joined the order in the fourth stage of their life. In the case of females, Sadhvis, even the theoretical injunction of religion does not exist. Among them it is noticeable that widows form a fair proportion. That a certain proportion of Hindu widows should turn away from life is understandable. The life open to a Hindu widow is very partial, if not always crooked and yet beset with difficulties. That the path of such women who at whatever age have to be celibate and to brave temptations, should appear as more difficult than the way opened by asceticism is but natural. The larger proportion of ascetic women, Sadhvis, however, is formed by females who enter asceticism after their marriage or as girls. In the former case, a number of domestic circumstances conspire to create disgust for life. The source of recruitment of those Sadhvis who are initiated in their girlhood is not known.

Male ascetics, who take to asceticism as the fourth stage of their life, are commonly known to keep themselves aloof and only rarely are to be met with among the regular Sādhus. The main source of recruitment of male Sādhus is orphans, discarded children, and children vowed to be offered to God by their parents. Though almost every sect asserted that it did not accept any candidate before the age of majority, it is well known that this rule is more observed in its breach than in its practice. A fair number of the Sādhus, however, is formed by those who more or less willingly chose the way of asceticism in their adolescent or post-adolescence years. Some of them have earnestly chosen the path as one of spiritual advance while others have taken to it just to escape the difficulties of ordinary life. Whenever and however recruited, it is the essence of the ordination ceremony that every novitiate has to pass through a rite symbolizing his civil death.

The Mahanta of every sect and every centre described invariably lamented the progressive decrease in recruitment to their ranks. Yet it is surprising and interesting both, that one of the older sects, the Mādhva-Gauḍiya or the Caitanyaite, was able to start a Mission and found fresh centres at various places about the beginning of the 20th century. This in itself should indicate that it is not so much the urge to asceticism in itself that has waned but that the nature of ideals to be achieved through asceticism has changed. The older sects with their more or less ancient ideals are not able to adequately tap the resources of the ascetic temperament in the population. This indication becomes almost a scientific conclusion when we consider the phenomenal growth and the tremendous success of the Rāmakrishna Mission, which is almost a new sect. It was inaugurated by Swāmi Vivekānanda round the personality of Rāmakrishna Paramahamsa, only a few years before the starting of the Gauḍiya Mission of the Caitanyaite school. The enthusiastic support received in the Malayalam region by Śrī Nārāyaṇaguru Swāmi corroborates our view.

Excepting for the few monastic centres of the Śankara school of monistic Vedanta, of the Mādhva school of the dualistic Vedanta and of the Viraśaiva school, India south of the Narmada has been almost bare of centres of asceticism. Northern India may be described as the home of Sādhus, not only as their cradle but also as their present stronghold. It is a hard fact to explain why Kanyākumārī and Rāmeśvara, which figure as important places of Hindu pilgrimage, have not attracted the attention of northern ascetic sects. One explanation that occurs to us is that the growth and strength of asceticism in the North have mainly lain in Vaishnavite development, and the South especially beyond the Krishna is dominated by Śaivism and the Śankara school of religious philosophy. As against this it may be objected that the Vaishnava sect of Rāmānuja has its stronghold in the South-East. But it should be remembered that the Rāmānuji sect has never shown a partiality for asceticism.

And the history of another Vaishnavite school of southern origin, namely Mādhva, supports the explanation. The three principal centres of this sect are presided over by ascetic abbots but they have hardly any ascetic followers and only a few inmates there. They have not thrown out growing branches, nor do they seem to have endeavoured to gain foot-hold outside their restricted region. Outside its chosen and distinct area in the South, the sect only gave inspiration to the originally non-ascetic Caitanyaite sect to develop the ascetic line by claiming affiliation to it. In view of this history of the Mādhva sect, the explanation offered above can stand. But it is only partial. Because it is not only that the Vaishnavite ascetic schools have not developed and flourished in South India but also that the Dasanāmi ascetic orders have not spread out as in the North. Much less have the non-Dasanāmi Śaiva ascetic sects taken root there. The absence of ascetic sects of the Northern variety naturally meant the utter lack of Nāgā or militant ascetics. And their absence in the post-mediaeval history of South India explains the easy exploits, partially at least, of Haider Ali and his son Tipu Sultan.

Two modern movements, one of local origin and the other of North Indian, have now made up for the deficiency of centres of ascetic life in the South. The Rāmakrishna Mission has a number of its centres there. And in the extreme South-West the temple-centres founded by the great Iḷava ascetic Srī Nārāyaṇaguru Swāmi are staffed by ascetics who also discharge priestly functions for the followers of the Swāmi. The monastic order founded by Śrī Nārāyaṇaguru Swāmi, who was born near Trivandurum in A. D. 1854 and relinquished his material body in A. D. 1928, is known as the Dharma Sangha.

The principal sects have vied with one another to provide for themselves a philosophical basis rooted in the Vedic and other accepted sacred texts. The Dasanāmi and other Śaiva Samnyāsis

look upto the 'Bhāshya' of Śankarācārya and his monistic Vedanta as the authoritative pattern of their life philosophy. The Vaishnava sects have the four other philosophical view-points for their beacon-light. All these philosophical systems may be said to have been formulated by ascetics. For though Vallabhācārya, who provided a comprehensive and complete exposition of Pure Dualism, was a householder yet it was an ascetic, the founder Vishnuswāmi, who provided the basis for it. As far as philosophical viewpoint is concerned, the whole Hindu populace, in so far as a whole population can be said to understand and possess a philosophical view-point, is affiliated to one or the other of these five systems of philosophical thought originated or promulgated by ascetics.

Those sects and those individual ascetics who cultivated the technique of Yogic concentration, whether as their basic creed or as a routine or only as an adjunct to their asceticism, have not only contributed to the spiritual life of the Indian people, but have also helped to create an abiding interest in the system of Indian religio-philosophical thought and practice among Euro-Americans by their achievements in this line, even more so than the few great expounders that have caught the Western imagination. It is a well-known fact that Western interest in Indian thought mainly as a curiosity in the intellectual evolution of humanity came to be deepened as towards a significant contribution to thought and life only when the life of Rāmakrishna Paramahamsa became known to the West. When the West read Max Muller's *Life of Rāmakrishna Paramahamsa* it began to awake to the significance of Yogic practice. Since then to a number of thoughtful Western minds Yoga has made a progressive and enchanting appeal. Oman, writing about Indian Sādhus in the last decade of the nineteenth century, was largely squeamish, and only occasionally appreciated the earnestness of some of them and generally tended to explain away the undoubtedly great achievements of some of the practitioners of Yoga. Paul Brunton, to name only one very well-known European writer, in the

nineteen twenties came to our country in earnest quest and intensive search of great practitioners of Yoga. His books brought into prominence the great Yogic achievements of Ramaṇa Maharshi of Madras and roused the West, at least the thinking section of it, to an earnest appreciation of the yogic technique. The great change in the Western attitude to Indian asceticism is measured by the fact that no less a European writer than Romain Rolland wrote again in the fourth decade of the 20th century the life of Rāmakrishna with the novel sub-title *Ramakrishna Man-Gods and the Universal Gospel of Vivekananda.* It is significant to note in this connection that an English poet and litterateur J. C. Powys in his the *Meaning of Culture* applauds the discovery of the concentrative technique made by Indians, and Menuhin, the great violinist, proclaims the value of 'yoga' in his own peculiar achievements.

Some of the ascetic sects, most of them Vaishnava, were started with a reformist purpose. Their ideal was either to throw open the order of ascetics to the Śūdras and in some cases even to the scheduled castes as well as to females. The exigencies of time enabled Rāmānanda to achieve his purpose of throwing open his path of devotion and asceticism to the Śūdras. The same circumstances, it appears, were responsible for Madhusūdana Sarasvati's achievement in the Śaiva school of asceticism. He embodied the Śūdras among the Nāgā ascetics of that school. For all practical purposes, Sūdras have been appropriately assimilated within asceticism. Yet there is a distance, however small it may be. No one but a Brahmin ascetic can cook the meals and serve them at any of the ascetic centres, extant today, whether Śaiva or Vaishnava. Likewise the worship of the deity remains his privilege and preserve. Those sects, which started by admitting members of the scheduled castes to their ascetic ranks, generally failed in their purpose of assimilation. Soon after the founder's death, they either closed their doors to the scheduled castes, or if they still went on admitting them, did so by forming a separate and distinct order for

them. The one or two most forward sects which at their start received enthusiastic Muslims amongst their ascetic ranks soon found themselves unable to secure new Muslim recruits.

In strictly religious matters, quite a number of new Vaishnava sects, which proclaimed their opposition to idol-worship and dethroned the usual Hindu deities, particularly after the founding of the Kabīrpanth, soon filled the vacant throne by a picture of their founder, adding besides, the book of his sayings. Opposition to idol-worship remained a proclamation which failed to influence even the mode of worship. It essentially remained the same old Hindu method which was designed for idol-worship. In some sects not only did some of the relics of the founder find their way to the Holy of Holies but in some cases a sort of tomb, too, got in there as an equal object of worship !

One philanthropic activity of monastic centres seems to have been ancient. And that is the distribution of food to those hungry ones who happen to be present there at meal-time. As soon as the mid-day meal is ready, authorities of a monastic centre proclaim the fact and invite the hungry ones to join in. It is very interesting to note that this practice of proclaiming the meals and of offering the same to any mendicant was a practice common with householders and even with non-ascetic institutions. From that practice stem the modern 'annachatra's. Manu forbids a student, returned home, to accept what he calls 'ghuṣṭānna,' that is, food which is offered after declaration as is done at these 'annachatra's, 'free-food-houses'.

Maintaining a college to instruct the recruits in the Sanskrit language and in the various sciences calculated to give religio-philosophical knowledge was a practice of monastic centres as early as the 10th century A. D. This practice has continued unabated. During the last fifty years or so publication of appropriate journals for discussion and dissemination of religio-philosophical problems not only by the newest of ascetic sects, the Rāma-

krishna Mission, but also by some older sects, as for instance, the Gauḍiya Mission, extends it in a highly appropriate direction. As we have already mentioned, there is a fortnightly Hindi publication called *Jāgṛti*, sponsored by an ascetic of the Rāmānandi sect, which forms the forum for the discussion not only of religio-philosophical topics, but also of political issues as well as problems affecting the totality of ascetics irrespective of their sect. Today religious discourses are far more regularly given at monastic centres than in the Hindu temples at large.

At many of the monastic centres there is an inmate who is well-versed in Āyurvedic medicine and manages a dispensary for the benefit of the general public.

Sadhuism having come of age at about the end of the eighteenth century, manifests its mature behaviour in the nineteenth. It was in 1824, nine years before the death of Rājā Rām Mohan Roy, who, to purge Hinduism of some of its evils, had started the Brāhmo Samāja in Bengal, that in the opposite corner of India, in Saurashtra, was born Muḷaśankara, later known as Swāmi Dayānanda Sarasvati.[1] If Rājā Rām Mohan Roy is christened a reformist, Swāmi Dayānanda Sarasvati is called a revivalist. Like Rāmadāsa before him, Muḷaśankara fled away from his home when his parents decided to get him married at the age of twentytwo. In his wanderings he met one ascetic named Brahmānanda and learnt the Vedanta doctrine from him. In 1848, he went to Chanoda Kanyali on the banks of the Narmada, which seems to have been a well-known centre of ascetics then. There he got himself ordained into the Sarasvatī order of Dasanāmis by one Paramānanda. Since then he came to be known as Dayānanda Sarasvati. With a message he came out before the public in 1868. He is described by Farquhar[2] as "a large, powerful man with striking features and rather a remarkable voice." In his public disputations, which he carried on in Sanskrit and which attracted

huge audiences, he is said to have been universally victorious. In 1872 he went to Calcutta and met not only Rāmakrishna Paramahamsa but also Keśavacandra Sen. He discovered that Keśavacandra Sen and other Brahmo leaders wielded great influence in Bengal because they carried on their preaching in Bengali. Thereafter he adopted Hindi as the medium of expression for his public utterances. He founded the Ārya Samāja at Lahore in 1877. In 1874 he had already published the '*Satyārthaprakāśa*', a Hindi work setting forth his views not only on God, the universe, man and his salvation, but also on Indian creeds, ascetic orders, marriage, education and food. In essence, the watchword of his movement was back to the Vedas. His movement and the Samāja gathered strength in Punjab. He relinquished his body in 1883.[3]

In 1887 was started the Dayānanda Anglo-Vedic college to perpetuate his memory and carry on his work. Thus Dayānanda's school was the first agency to develop the old instructional basis so as to modernize it and to enable those educated in that system to meet the modern challenge. The Ārya Samāja itself is almost a sect, and though its founder was an ascetic, has been guided and conducted by householders like Lālā Lajpatrāi.

The aim of the original founder, however, was further implemented by another Samnyāsi who, in his life activity, like Vidyāraṇya and Rāmadāsa of old, embraced not only political but also social work suitable to modern conditions. He is Swāmi Śraddhānanda, who was born in Jalandar district of Punjab in 1857[4] and was assassinated in Delhi on his sick bed in 1926. Munśirāma, as Swāmi Śraddhānanda was known in his pre-ascetic days, was married in 1877, and entered Allahabad University for his education a year thereafter. Soon after his joining the Ārya Samāja he came to be known as Mahātmā Munśirama since 1885. His wife died in 1891. At about the same time a keen difference regarding the course of studies to be pursued at the D. A. V.

College arose among the principal workers of the Samāja. Mahātma Munśirāma, who has attested[5] that his ideas were inspired by Dayānanda's *Satyārthaprakāśa*, was of the opinion that Vedic studies must form the principal basis of the course of studies at the college. He found himself dubbed a religious fanatic and, along with his companions, was debarred from the management of the college. In 1894, the Ārya Samāja divided into two groups, not on the question of meat-eating as is generally believed, but on the afore-mentioned difference pertaining to educational practice. Munśirāma strove very hard to give concrete shape to his ideas regarding the education of Hindu youths. His efforts were crowned with success in 1902, when he started the Gurukul at Kangri near Hardwar. Sir James (later Lord) Meston visiting the institution in 1913 remarked that it was "one of the most original and interesting experiments carried on in these provinces [U. P.], in fact in the whole of India. One of the most wonderful, interesting, and stimulating institutions; we have a band of ascetics devoted to their duty, and working in the wilderness following the traditions of the ancient Rishis, combined with the most modern scientific methods, and working practically for nothing, and a set of students of strong physique, obedient, loyal, thoughtful, devoted, extra-ordinarily happy and extra-ordinarily well-fed."[6] It seems Munśirāma worked there as the principal of the Gurukul till 1916 or 1917. In 1917 he got himself ordained an ascetic and was thenceforward known as Swāmi Śraddhānanda.

Swāmi Śraddhānanda, who was tall and strongly built, had a powerful personality. His appearance, his gait and his speech were all of a heroic stamp. He went to Punjab after the Jalianwala Bagh massacre and during the Martial Law regime. He helped the Akali Sikhs in their agitation about Guruka Bagh. During his Punjab tour of 1919, he stood unflinchingly before the bayonets of the Martial Law soldiers. The same year, he preached Hindu-Muslim unity from the pulpit of the Jumma Masjid of Delhi and worked as the chairman of the reception committee for the Amritsar

session of the Indian National Congress. Later he returned to the Gurukul and remained in charge of it for two years. In 1923 was started the Śuddhi and Sanghaṭana movement; and Swāmi Śraddhānanda was elected the first president of the Śuddhi Sabhā. He reconverted the Malkana Rajputs to Hinduism. In the same year was started the Kanyā Gurukul or Gurukul for women.

The galvanizing effect of the work of this ascetic produced echoes far and wide in the country. These echoes mingling with the still audible, though less loud ones, created by the even greater ascetic personality of Swāmi Vivekānanda, who had relinquished his material body all too untimely in 1902, reverberated loudly in a dramatic work of the famous Marathi litterateur B. V. *alias* Māmā Varerkar. His drama entitled 'Saṁnyāśyāca Saṁsāra', 'The Household of an Ascetic', was enacted in Bombay in the last week of September 1919. It was printed and published in 1920 with a significant dedication to Swāmi Śraddhānanda. Varerkar portrays in the drama a modern highly educated lifelong celibate with unconventional manners installed as an abbot of an important religious centre. He shows him as theoretically convinced of and practically engaged in, not only reconverting Christian and other Hindu converts but also in varied kinds of social work. Consistent with this attitude the abbot believes in the truth of all religions and decries none. In the dedication, Varerkar appreciatingly attributes this kind of activity as forming the household activity of Swāmi Śraddhānanda, the ascetic. Varerkar's appraisal of modern Indian Sādhus is a testimony to the great work of Swāmi Vivekānanda, whose picture bedecks the cover of his book, and of Swāmi Śraddhānanda.

The spiritual preceptor of Swāmi Vivekānanda was junior to Swāmi Dayānanda. He was Rāmakrishna Paramahamsa of Bengal. Nearly three years after Rājā Ram Mohan Roy's death in 1836, Gadādhara Chatterji was born.[7] He was married in 1859, but left

home soon after. It is remarkable that in his spiritual quest he was helped by a Brahmin nun (Samnyāsinī). Later he was ordained into Samnyāsa by one Toṭāpuri, whereafter Gadādhara was named Rāmakrishna and ever since has been known as Rāmakrishna Paramahamsa. In 1871, his wife came and lived by him as his devoted pupil. From about that time his remarkable achievements in 'yoga' brought him into public notice. Among the many educated young men that began to flock to his discipleship there was one Narendranātha Datta. It is this young man, who became the world-famous Swāmi Vivekānanda.

Born in 1863[8], Narendranātha first met, in the company of his uncle, Rāmakrishna Paramahamsa in 1882. The charm of Rāmakrishna was irresistible. The mind of Vivekānanda was extremely sensitive to spiritual influences. It was profound too. Small wonder that even a brief contact between these highly developed and sensitive personalities led to the magnificent result of the flowering of Vivekānanda into the most original and outstanding ascetic of modern times. Rāmakrishna relinquished his body in 1886, leaving behind a batch of young disciples headed by the brilliant Narendranātha. Soon after, Narendranātha as Vivekānanda established a monastic Order entitled Śrī Rāmakrishna. The ideals and ends to be pursued by the Order were clearly laid down as two. First, to organize a band of monks leading a life of renunciation and spirituality; second, to send out appropriately trained monks to serve humanity in all possible ways, looking upon all, irrespective of sex, age, caste, creed, nationality and colour, as veritable manifestations of the Divine.

Vivekānanda withdrew into retirement for spiritual self-development for more than five years. In 1892 he emerged from his retirement characteristically enough at Kanyā-Kumāri, Cape Kamorin, the southern end of India. When he appeared at Madras, his presence led the people to propose that Vivekānanda should be

sent to the Parliament of Religions that was going to be held at Chicago. His participation in that august assembly, the first of its kind in the world – Akbar's more or less similar congregation some three centuries earlier is of course on a different plane – at once made him a world figure. To gauge the significance of the mark that he made at that time it is sufficient to read the following two extracts from American newspapers given by Farquhar.[9] *The New York Critique* wrote: "He is an orator by divine right, and his strong, intelligent face in its picturesque setting of yellow and orange was hardly less interesting than those earnest words, and the rich, rhythmical utterance he gave them." *The New York Herald* went even further when it observed: "Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation."

That the remarks of the American newspapers were not a mere matter of courtesy is clear from the words used. The most concrete proof of the truth of these observations lies in the fact that Swāmi Vivekānanda secured two American disciples. One was Madame Louise who became Swāmi Abhayānanda and the other was Mr. Sandsberg, who became Swāmi Kṛpānanda. Crossing over to England, on his return-journey, the land of imperialistic arrogance and jingoistic fervour, he was joined by Miss Margaret Noble, who turned out to be his most notable disciple. Her ascetic name sister Niveditā proclaims for ever the uniqueness of Rāmākrishnian monasticism. It was in 1897 that Vivekānanda landed in his country with his western disciples. His triumph was acclaimed by large audiences of Hindus who looked upon him as the saviour of their faith.

Soon after his arrival in India, Vivekānanda started in May 1897 the Rāmakrishna Mission Association. Two years thereafter, in 1899, he founded the Rāmakrishna Maṭha, or monastic centre, at Belur in Howrah district. The Rāmakrishna Mission and its

varied activities have grown in strength year by year. In 1945 it had 41 centres spread all over the world. Of these more than 20 were located outside India, the United States of America alone having 12 of them. As illustrative of the varied social activity of this Mission we may mention that in 1945 it managed 9 indoor hospitals and 61 outdoor dispensaries, 41 relief centres, 42 hostels, 2 colleges and a number of schools of all descriptions. Nor did it omit the hill-tribes from the benefits of its activities. Its literary activities in the form of maintenance of libraries and reading-rooms and of publication of books and magazines on religious subjects stamp it as a first-rate cultural institution for the educated section.

The life of Vivekānanda though short, proved to be deeply vitalizing. Not only did he extend the bounds of Hinduism so as to turn it into a universal religion, but what is more important from our point of view, he also energized and reformed ascetic ideals. Social service of varied kinds has now come to be recognized as a legitimate and important objective of ascetic and monastic life. His personal example has tended to obliterate the rigid sartorial differences between Śaiva and Vaishnava ascetics. The ochre-coloured or the saffron-hued garments have come to be recognized as a symbol of asceticism. Ānanda-ending names have gained favour among all sects of Indian Sadhus. And, what is more important, his example has reawakened Indian Sadhus to the need of wider organization and of propaganda.

The steps that Indian Sadhus have recently taken to promulgate their view-point have already been mentioned. The most significant development on the organizational side is the convening of the conference called The Akhila Bhāratīya Sādhu Sammelana at Delhi in 1950. Before that event a common meeting for the discussion of problems connected with Sadhu life was never held. The previous concourses of Sadhus for such a purpose were conditioned by their main lines of affiliation. Thus the Vaishnava Bairāgis of all sects are known to have met at Galata in Rajasthan

in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Vaishnava and Śaiva ascetics came together only at the time of the Kumbha assemblage. And their coming together was always an occasion of trepidation for the authorities, the public and the Sadhus themselves. On such occasions, it was considered an achievement if the gathering passed off quietly without serious riots. Such were the attitudes in which Śaiva and Vaishnava ascetics used to come together. The Akhila Bhāratīya Sādhu Sammelana bringing together in a common body all the ascetic schools has thus begun the new era of deliberation and co-operation in place of rivalry and hostility.

In the purely educational line, too, a forward step has recently been taken by a Vaishnava Sadhu. We refer to the founding of the Vaishnava University by Bhaktihṛdaya Bon Mahārāj of the Mādhva-Gauḍīya sect.

Individual ascetics have been inspired by the ancient examples of Rāmadāsa and Prāṇanātha and the contemporary one of Swāmi Śraddhānanda to devote themselves to political activity. In this connection we may mention the stalwart and powerful Rāmānanda Tīrtha of the Congress Party. He has been the leader of the Congress Party of the Hyderabad State. Of the politically opposed party three ascetics deserve mention. All of them unsuccessfully contested at the last general election. Bon Mahārāj, the founder of the Vaishnava University, had desired to represent Vrindavan. Digvijaynātha, the Nātha ascetic who was till recently the general secretary of the Hindu Mahāsabhā, in vain tried two different constituencies. The most important Sadhu personality of the last general election was Prabhudatta Brahmacāri of Prayag. He was bold enough to oppose Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his home-constituency.

Indian Sadhuism is thus seen to be a process of long evolution. It has shown great vitality and readiness to adapt itself to changing

circumstances without foregoing its fundamental principles. It has counted among its ranks a fairly large number of outstanding personalities. They have contributed very liberally to the spiritual, intellectual and social uplift of their lay brethren. When one hears of or comes across aberrant Sadhus of dubious character and gets into the mood of passing an adverse judgment on Sadhuism in general, let him ponder over the following observation of a profound student of the history of Christianity in Europe: "The root-problem of monasticism is one which every ideal has to face."[10]

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4 *Ency. Brit.* XV, p. 688; IXX, pp. 836–7; XXI, pp 920–1.
5 *Ency. Brit.* XIII, pp. 9–10.
6 Flinders-Petrie, *Memphis and its Foreigners* in *Scientific American* Supplement, 1909, p. 300; *Memphis* I p. 17; Knight, p. 368.

ASCETIC ORIGINS

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2 *Vācaspatya.*
3 P. 53.
4 P. 43–45.
5 P. 41.
6 P. 18.
7 D. R. Bhandarkar, loc. cit., p. 18; *Vedic Index*, II, pp. 185, 447.
8 P. 33.
9 P. 80.
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11 Keith, I, p. 226.
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20 Chanda, *Ibid*
21 *Bṛhadāraṇayaka Up.*, IV, 2, 1; 4, 22; III, 5.
22 *Chāndogya Up.*, VIII, 5; 4, 3.
23 P. 20.
24 Vol. II, part 1, p. 422.
25 *As. Gr. Sūtra*, III, 3.
26 R. G. Bhandarkar, p. 42.
27 *Cambridge History of India* Vol. I, pp. 158–159.
28 „ „ „ „ I, p. 153.
29 R. G. Bhandarkar, p. 42.
30 Sharma, pp. 29–30.
31 *Chāndogya Up.*, VI, 1 ff.
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33 Citrav, *Prācīnacaritrakaśa.*
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Asceticism comes of Age

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18 *Quarterly J. of the Mythic Society*, Vol. VII, p. 177.
19 *Ibid.* VII, pp. 177–80.
20 *Ibid.* VII, pp. 182–3.
21 R. G. Bhandarkar, p. 118.
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26 *Q. J. Mythic Society*, Vol. VII, p. 329.
27 P. 47.
28 *Q. J. Mythic Society*, Vol. VII, pp. 328–9. Each one of the present three important centres of Madhva sect claims to have these original idols in its temple.
29 *Founders of Vijayanagar* (1938).
30 B. A. Saletore, Vol. I, pp. 109–10.
31 *Loc. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 947–9.
32 *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 848.
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35 *The Grand Rebel*, (1937), p. 93.
36 *Dāsabodha*, II, 8, 9.
37 *Marāṭhyāncyā Itihāsācī Sādhane*, Vol. III, preface, pp. 57–9, 92–4.
38 *The History of the Marathas*, Vol. II, (1948), p. 141.
39 D. B. Parasnis, *Brahmendraswāmi Dhāvaḍshīkar*; Life, p. 102.
40 *Ibid.* Letters, No. 52. pp. 77, ff.
41 Vide his novel entitled *Ānandamaṭha*. This is referred to by Farquhar (2), p. 18, as the Samnyāsi rebellion mentioned

in *Warren Hastings' Life.*

SAMNYASIS OR SAIVA ASCETICS

1 Wilson, pp. 125, 150, 146; Oman, p. 152.
2 VI, 52.
3 Pānini, II, 1, 1; Keilhorn's edition of *Mahābhāṣya*, Vol. I, p. 365 and Vol. II, p. 125.
4 Panini, VI, 1, 154; Keilhorn, *loc. cit.*, III p. 96.
5 *J. R. A. S.*, (1925), p. 481.
6 XII, 10.
7 *Loc. cit.*, p. 162.
8 Anuśāsana parva, 141, 89.
9 *Pārāśara Dharma Saṁhitā*, (B. S. S. 1893), Vol. I, part II, p. 160 ff.
10 Sharma, pp. 28–30.
11 *Rv.* IV, 40, 5; *Kāiṭhakopaniṣad*, V, 2.
12 Chitrav (1), p. 229.
13 *Ibid.*
14 XIV, 79.
15 XXI, 94.
16 *Mahāvīracarita*, I, 5.
17 *Loc. cit.*, p. 18.
18 *Jābālopaniṣad*, 6; *Nārada-parivrājakopaniṣad*, III.
19 *J. R. A. S.*, 1925, p. 482.
20 P. 208.
21 Swami Ramanand, *Goswāmi Gauravānka*, II, p. 66.
22 Pp. 149–50.
23 *Loc. cit.*, I, p. 86
24 Vol. II, pp. 845–46.
25 Vol. III, p. 1751.
26 Farquhar, (2), p. 13.
27 P. 150.
28 P. 152.

DASANAMIS OR THE SANKARA SCHOOL OF SADHUS

1 R. G. Bhandarkar, p. 58.
2 *Chaitanya to Vivekananda*, (G. A. Natesan & Co.) pp. 4–8.
3 Wilson, p. 130.
4 XII, 68–69.
5 Russell and Hira Lal, Vol. III, p. 153.
6 IV–VII.
7 Russell and Hira Lal, III, p. 152; *E. R.E.* (Asceticism), II, 92.
8 P. 80.
9 Oman, 242–47.
10 25th February 1952. This custom is very old indeed. Not only does Alberuni mention that Kurukshetra in Thaneshwar was one of the few places of pilgrimage—as a matter of fact one of the five places he singled out for specific mention—but he quotes from the celebrated astronomer Varāhamihira an explanatory statement. Varāhamihira, who is referred to the sixth century A. D., informs us that the people used to bathe at the lake at Kurukshetra visiting it from afar because at the time of the eclipses all the other sacred waters were believed to enter into this lake of Kurukshetra (Sachau, *Alberuni's India* Vol. II, pp. 145–7).
11 *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, VII, p. 180 ff.

DASANAMI NAGAS OR MILITANT SAMNYASIS

1 Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson, pp. 35, 36.
2 Farquhar (2), pp. 1–2.
3 Panini, V, 2, 76.
4 *Harṣacarita*, ed. by P. V. Kane (1918) pt. III, pp. 46, 47, 49 50, 55.
5 III, after verse 14.

6 XV, 12–21.

7 In fact, there is some confusion in his references to Gosais and Jogis which terms he often uses interchangeably. We have, therefore, utilized his account in this context though sometimes the expression used is Jogis.

8 Vol. II, pp. 601–2, 643; Vol. III, p. 1266.

9 (2) pp. 12–13.

10 *Akbar, the Great Mogul* (II ed.), pp.78–79; Elliot and Dawson Vol. V, p. 318; *Ain-i-Akbari* Vol. II, p. 423; *Muntakhal-ut-Tawarikh*, trans. by W. H. Lowe, Vol. II, pp. 94–5.

11 P. 90.

12 *Goswāmi Gauravānka*, p. II, pp. 77 ff.

13 P. 87.

14 *J. B. B. R. A. S.*, XX, p. 385.

15 *Ibid.* p. 393; R. G. Bhandarkar, pp. 150–151.

16 pp. 148–149.

17 Vol. X, pp. 866–67.

18 J. Sarkar, pp. 103-107. It should be noted that Russell and Hira Lal on the authority of Nesfield give the number of the dead as 500 and not 5000 (Vol. III, p. 157).

19 pp. 93-94.

20 Russell and Hira Lal, III, pp. 156-157.

21 *J. R. A. S.*, 1925, p. 485.

NATHAPANTHIS OR KHANPHATA JOGIS

1 R. G. Bhandarkar, pp. 111-13, 121-4.

2 VII—8; Karmarkar, Vol. I, pp. 239, ff; Ayyar, p. 41; D. R. Bhandarkar, pp. 39-46.

3 P. 165, f. n.

4 V–8; Karmarkar, p. 225.

5 P. 237.

6 P. 170,

7 *Ibid.* pp. 111-12
8 *Ibid.* pp. 107-11.
9 II, 8-15.
10 3-7.
11 Pp. 117, 118. Kālāmukhas were a sect only slightly different from the Kāpālikas and were much more known in the South.
12 Ferguson and Burgess, p. 433.
13 I, ll. 125-36; V, ll. 125 to 65.
14 Ayyar, pp. 140-2.
15 R. G. Bhandarkar, p. 127,
16 P. 99.
17 The commentator translates human bones - narāsthi - by mahāśankhākṣa (mahāśankha - akṣa).
18 Pp. 111–14.
19 Pp. 115–17.
20 Pp. 118–22.
21 The eight 'mahāsiddhis' referred to are according to the commentator.

(i) Aṇimā (subtlety), (ii) Mahimā (greatness), (iii) Garimā (weightiness) (iv) Laghimā (lightness), (v)Prākāmya (capacity to do as one likes), (vi) Īśatva (mastery), (vii) Vaśitva (capacity to control others), and (viii) Prāpti (expansiveness).

22 Pp. 122-4. In the list given by Danielou in his *Yoga* (pp. 43–5), Garimā is replaced by Kāmāvasāyitā, (complete satisfaction).
23 Pp. 124-30.
24 P. 249.
25 XXIII-XXIV, R. G. Bhandarkar, p. 128; Karmarkar, p. 241.
26 XV, 7–27.
27 Karmarkar, pp. 244–5.
28 Briggs, pp. 75–7.
29 *Ibid.* pp. 228–9.
30 *Ibid.* p. 249.
31 *Ibid.* pp. 256–7,

32 *Chāndogya* VIII, 6; *Kaṭha* II, 6-16; *Praśna* III, 6-7; *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* IV, 3. 20.
33 II, 6.
34 *E. R. E.* XII, p. 834.
35 Cowell, (2nd ed.), pp. 136, 217_20, 290.
36 VI, 18_21.
37 VI. 490-1.
38 Briggs, p. 304.
39 Pp. 253-4 and 265-7.
40 Wilson, p. 136.

REFORMIST SAMNYASIS

1 Prof. S. G. Tulpule, in *Nava-Bhārata*, April 1952, pp. 11-12, 17.
2 Wilson, pp. 163-9.
3 *E. R. E.*, XII, p. 504.

BAIRAGIS OR VAISHNAVA SADHUS

1 R. G. Bhandarkar, p. 86.
2 Citrāv, (1) pp. 482, 483.
3 Hazra, pp. 198-199.
5 Raychaudhuri, pp, 190-191.
5 Pp. 49-50.
6 R. G. Bhandarkar, p. 67.
7 R. G. Bhandarkar, pp. 62-63; De, p. 9.
8 Mishra, p. 235.
9 R. G. Bhandarkar, p. 63.
10 P. 77.
11 Pp. 49, 55-56.
12 R. G. Bhandarkar, pp. 77-82.
13 R. G. Bhandarkar, pp. 58-59.
14 De, p. 12.

15 De, p. 71.
16 De, pp. 13, 15, 16, 17, 73, 112.
17 De, pp. 73, 87-88.
18 *U. P. Gazetteer*, Vol. II, Saharanpur, p. 254.
19 De, pp. 72, 87-88; Wilson, p. 103.
20 R. G. Bhandarkar's statement that "The spiritual teachers of Chaitanya's sect are celibates" is evidently incorrect.
21 Wilson, 104.
22 pp. 58-59.
23 R. G. Bhandarkar, p. 85.
24 De, pp. 24-25.
25 R. G. Bhandarkar, p. 67.
26 Vide page 136 above.
27 Oman, p. 189.
28 This procedure is more or less common to all the Vaishnava sects.
29 pp. 123-170.
30 We have rendered 'bhāva' by sentiment and 'Bhaktibhāva' by Bhakti sentiment. Writers in English on Sanskrit poetics generally render 'bhāva' by emotion or emotional state and 'rasa' by sentiment. But as will be clear from our text, the Rāmānandi view at least definitely precludes the rendering of 'rasa' by sentiment and 'bhāva' by emotional state.

CATUHSAMPRADAYI NAGAS OR MILITANT BAIRAGIS

1 p. 17
2 p. 66
3 pp. 1081–2.

REFORMIST BAIRAGIS

1 Chaturvedi, p. 275; Gaud, p. 735.
2 De, p. 99, f. n. 3. The book published by the sect is called *Rādhāsudhānidhi* and not *Rādhārasasudhānidhi*.

3 Pp. 123–125.
4 K. Sen, p. 159
5 Wilson, pp. 64–65.
6 Wilson, p. 65; Gaud, p. 737.
7 Loc. cit., p. 415.
8 '*Vicāra-sāgara*', Gujarati trans. by M. S. Tripathi (1927), pp. 140–152; Chaturvedi, p. 435.
9 Loc. cit. p. 65.
10 Loc. cit., Vol. II, pp. 863, 868.
11 Sen, p. 146.
12 Loc. cit., p. 616.
13 'Santa' issue of *Kalyaṇa*, pp. 651–652.

SADHUS OF MISCELLANEOUS SECTS

1 R. G. Bhandarkar, p. 132; S. C. Nandimath, pp. 2–5, 15.
2 Loc. cit, pp. 79–80.
3 R. G. Bhandarkar, p. 138.
4 K. A. Padhye, '*Hemādri Caritra*', p. 22.
5 *Ekanātha Gāthā*, 2557, 2666, 3736–8, 3891–2.
6 Bhārata Itihāsa Sanśodhaka Maṇḍala, *Sammelana Vṛtta*, III, pp. 110 ff.
7 '*Mahārāṣṭra Kavicaritra*', (1913), II, 183.
8 S. K. De, p. 71.
9 Op. cit., p. 55.
10 Op. cit., pp. 69–71.
11 For the information about individual Maharashtrian ascetics given in this chapter we have depended mostly on Citrāvṛśāstri's, '*Madhyayugīna Caritrakośa*'.

CONCLUSION

1 Farquhar, pp. 102 ff.
2 Ibid, p. 109.

3 Lajpatrai, pp. 4–33.

4 This is the date supplied to us in an informative communication by the authorities of the Gurukul. *Arvācīna Caritra-kośa* gives the year as 1856, which is unsupported.

5 Lajpatrai, loc. cit., p. 221.

6 Ibid, p. 235,

7 *The Rāmakrishna Mission* (1946) p. 12. ; Farquhar (loc. cit. p. 188) gives 1834 as the year of Rāmakrishna's birth.

8 J. N. Farquhar, following a brief biography published by Natesan & Co. of Madras, gives January 9th, 1862 as the date of his birth. Here we have adopted the date as given in the pamphlet 'The Ramakrishna Mission (1946)' by Swami Ranganathananda.

9 Op. cit. pp. 201–2

10 Coulton, Vol. I, p. 1.

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INDEX

Ābhāna Ākhāḍā, see Āvāhana Ākhāḍā.
Abhayānanda, Swāmi, 263.
Abu-l-Fazl, 114, 115.
Acāris, among Rāmānandis, 196, 197.
Acāryas, Lingayat, see Jangama.
Acyuta sect, see Mahānubhāva sect.
Acyutaprekśācārya, see Purushottama Tirtha.
Acyutāśrama, 245.
Ādināṭha, 145.
Advaitānanda, 184.
Agan Ākhāḍā, 91, 120.
Aghoraghaṇṭa, 135, 136.
Aghorapanthis, the sect of, 136, 150, 151, 152, 154.
Aghoris, Kinnārāmi, 215.
Agniveśya, 36.
Ahirs, 151.
Āi-pantha, a Jogi section, 159.
Ajgaonkar, J. R. 242.
Ājīvakas, the sect of, 32, 41.
Akali Sikhs, 260.
Akbar, 73, 114 ff. 263.
Ākhāḍā Jogi, see Dalicā.
Ākhāḍā, the Nāgā Samnyāsi organization, 116, 160.
Ākhāḍā, Vaishnava, 210, 220.
- the banners of, 209.
- Dadupanthi, 226.
- sources of income of, 210.

Akula Siddhānta, 144.
Akhila Bhāratīya Sādhu Sammelana, 264, 265.
Akkalkoṭkar, Rāmabhārati, 243.
Alakhiya Ākhāḍā, 120, 122.
Alakhwālās, 104, 151.
Alarka, 40.
Al-Badaoni, 115.
Alexander, 46, 47.
Altekar A. S., 63.
Alvars, 61, 172.
Amarakaṇṭha, 58.
Amitagati, 66.
Amṛtaprāśana, the rite of initiation among Nirmalas, 166.
Ānanda Ākhāḍā, 118.
Ānanda Brahmacāri, 96.
Ānandagiri, 84, 93, 142, 243.
Ānandanātha, 77.
Ānanda Tīrtha, see Madhvācārya.
Ānandawāra, a Dasanāmi sec. 97
Anantānandācarya, 189.
Ani, an organizational unit of the Vaishnava Nāgās, 203, 204, 207 ff., 220.
-and banners, 208, 209.
Aṅgas of Yoga, 23.
Annachatra, 107, 257.
Annakūṭa, a Vaishnava festival, 251.
Anthony, St., 7.
Anubhavānanda, 191.
Anūpakaur, 166.
Anusūyā, 83.
Araṇya, a Dasanāmi order, 92 ff., 119.
Arjuna, 80.
Āruṇī, 83.
Ārya Samāja, 259, 260.
Āryā, the temple of, 131.
Āsana, an aṅga of Yoga, 147.
Asceticism, 1, 10, 25, 26, 29, 32, 36, 37 39, 43, 45, 51, 53, 58, 69, 75, 77, 78, 81, 92, 106, 127, 129, 162, 245, 250, 255, 256, 258, 265, 266;

– in Bengal, 93
– Buddhist, 42ff., 53
– in Christian culture, 7
– and Dattātreya, 83
– in Egypt, 7, 10, 11
– female, 43, 45, 46; see also female ascetics
– fighting, 127
– Garibadāsī, 234
– and its ideals, 253
– the ideal type in Indian society, 11
– in Italy, 8
– Jain, 42 ff., 53
– Maharashtrian, 247
– and its motives, 251
– and non-Hindus, 212, 213, 257
– recruitment to, 252, 253
– Śaiva, 160, 172, 241
– and Scheduled castes, 212
– in the South, 253
– and Sūdras, 256
– the symbol of, 264
– Vaishnava, 62, 80, 172
– traits of, 17, 24
– Vedic, 12, 13, 15, 16.
Ascetics, disposal of the dead amongst, 197.
Aśoka, 41, 45.
Āśrama, a Dasanāmi order, 81, 92, 94, ff., 98.
Āśramas, 2, 14, 16, 24, 25, 29, 30, 32, 43, 79, 89, 102.
Asthānī Ākhāḍā, Vaishnava, 203.
Aśvaghoṣa, 31.
Aṭala Ākhāḍā, 119, 125.
Atīta, a privileged stage of a Vaishnava Nāgā, 210.
Atītas, 87; ff. ;–Samnyāsi, 88
– Sanjogī, 87
– Turīyātīta, 88.
Ātmārāma Caitanya, 244.
Ātmārāma Paramahamsa, 246, 247.
Ātmārāmaswāmī Sindakhedkar, 246.
Atri, 83.
Aṭṭā Sthāna, a Rāmānandi centre, 192.
Aughar, a Jogi section, 121, 151, 152
– names of, 153.
Aurangzeb, 118, 221.
Austerities, 2, 7, 43, 49, 50, 56, 70, 122, 160, 168, 225
– by a Śūdra, 37.
Avadhūta, 83, 86, 88, 106, 184, 242
– divisions of, 87.
Avadhūtanātha, 153.
Avadhutānis, 117.
Āvāhana Ākhāḍā, 117.
Avigata, a gotra of Dasanāmi Samnyāsis, 96.
Avināśa, 162.

Bābāji Caitanya, 244.
Bādarāyaṇa. 53, 165.
Baḍā Sthāna, a Rāmānandi centre at Ayodhya, 190, 191.
Baḍī Chāvaṇī, a Rāmānandi centre, 191.
Bahūdaka, one of the four ascetic stages, 33.
Bakhtasingh, 226.
Bairāgīs, 78, 98, 101, 125, 126, 128, 161, 163, 168, 170 ff., 175, 179, 197, 202, 203, 206, 210, 216, 224, 228, 238, 264, 265; -the great massacre at Nasik of, 202; – reformists, 222, 228, 256, 257; – sects, 155, 173, 176, 178, 182;— struggle with Śaiva ascetics, 126, 193, 208 ; tilak-mark of, 172.
Balabhadra, 241.
Balabhadrī Ākhāḍā of the Vaishnavas, 203, 208.

Baladeva Vidyābhūśana, 171, 178ff., 202.
Bāḷājī Bājirāva, 114.
Bāḷānanda, 191, 203.
Balarāma, 66.
Balegame, the kālāmukha centre of, 109, 144.
Bali, the son of Virocana, 66.
Bāṇa, 111, 112.
Bangidāra, the second stage of a novitiate Vaishnava Nāgā, 210.
Banārasī, the kabirapanthi branch, see Surat-Gopāla.
Banavāridāsa, 225.
Bandihi, a kind of Rāmasanehi ascetics, 229.
Bāpaśakhā of the kabirpanthis, 215
Barabar, cave-dwellings of, 41.
Barnett, L.D., 130.
Basava, 144, 238, 239.
Bāvari, 44.
St. Benedict, 7.
Bestowals, five of the Rāmānandis, 195.
Bevan, E. R., 46.
Bhagavatācārya, 191.
Bhāgavatānanda Swāmi of Hardwar, 84.
Bhāgavatism, 53.
Bhagawāna, the founder of the Rāmānandi centre at Pindori, 188, 189.
Bhāgodāsa, 214.
Bhairava, 142, 143, 154, 155, 157.
Bhairava Ākhāḍā, see Junā Ākhāḍā.
Bhairava Avadhūta Jñānasāgara, see Jñānasāgarendra Sarasvati Avadhūta.
Bhairavācārya, 112.
Bhairava Giri Gosāvi, 201.
Bhairavaprakāśa, the weapon-spear of the Mahānirvāṇī Ākhāḍā of the Śaivas, 119.
Bhairava-Yogis, 136.
Bhairavī, the knife of the Jogis, 152
Bhakta Avadhūta, 87.
Bhaktagīra, 164.
Bhakti, the tenth rasa, 219, 220.
Bhakti-mārga, 215, 223, 234.
Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvati, 187.
Bhaktism, emotional, 185, 197ff.;
– its five mental states, 198.
Bhaktivinoda Thakur, 187.
Bhandarkar D.R., 14 ff.
Bhandarkar R.G., 66, 73, 131, 132, 135, 144, 172, 173, 177, 188, 204.
Bharata, 32, 38.
Bhāratī, a Dasanāmi order, 81, 92ff., 98, 119, 180, 248.
Bharga, 139.
Bhāskarācārya, 174.
Bhāskarānanda Sarasvati, 86, 93.
Bhavabhūti, 84, 135, 143.
Bhavānanda, 116.
Bhave, V.L., 242.
Bhek-Bārah-Pantha, 157, 158.
Bhikkuṇī or Bhikṣuṇi, 43, 45.
Bhikshu, 43, 52, 92, 106, 135, 138ff.
Bhimasimha, 226.
Bhogawāra, a Dasanāmi section, 97.
Bhṛgu, 17, 18, 20.
Bhṛgu, a 'gotra' of Dasanāmi Samnyāsis, 96.
Bhukaḍs, 121.
Bhur-bhuvah, a gotra of Dasanāmi Samnyāsis, 96.
Bhūriwāra, a Dasanāmi sec. 97.
Bhusuṇḍa, 102, 103.
Bihāra Vrindāvanī, a sub-sect of Nirmalas, 168.
Bikku, see Bhikshu.
Bindu Śrī, a Rāmānandi Tilak-mark, 190, 195.
Birbal, 114.
Biṭṭanadevī, 192.
Bhodhidharma, 6.

Bon Mahārāj, B.H., 187, 265.
Book-worship, 222, 229.
Brahma, 53, 94, 101, 120, 132, 197, 223; identification with rasa of, 220.
Brahmā, 30.
Brahma Avadhūta, 87.
Brahmacāris, 43, 45, 52, 54, 59, 63, 78, 79, 89ff., 96, 103, 120, 144, 163, 166, 234.
Brahmacāris, a Swāminārāyaṇa division, 237.
Brahmacarya, 19ff., 25, 29.
Brahmadeva, 132.
Brahmagiri, 121.
Brahmānanḍa, 246, 258.
Brahma Sampradāya, see Mādhva sect.
Brahmavids, - —as Pancagnayah and triṇāciketāh, 19.
Brahmendra Sarasvati, 76, 77, 241
Brahmendraswāmi Dhāvaḍśīkar, see Brahmendra Sarasvati
Brahmo Samaja, 258
Bṛhadgiri, 16
Briggs, 142, 145, 146, 150
Bṛjavallabhaśaraṇa, 175, 180, 202
Brunton Paul, 255
Buddha, the Prince Siddhārtha, 2, 4, 5, 14, 25, 31, 40ff.; against austerity, 43
Buddhism, 6, 11, 12, 29, 42, 44, 45, 53, 60, 92, 219;-in China, 6, 7;-the School of Inwardness, 6;-the three refugees, 5, 26, 42; - and 'tantra', 148
Bukkā Yadugiri Virupanna, the viceroy over Araja, 69

Caitanya, Mahāprabhu, 42, 93, 94, 156, 179ff., 197, 198, 219, 244, 245;-as the incarnation of Rādhākrishna, 184
Caitanya Brahmacāri, 90, 96
Caitanyaites, see Mādhva Gauḍiyas
Caitanyāśrama, see Vitthalapanta
Cakras, of the body, 146, 147
Cakradhara, 239
Cakrapāṇi, 239
Cāmuṇḍā, 136
Cancala Bhārati, see Akkalkotkar Rāmabhārati
Caṇḍa-Kāpāli, 150
Canḍikā, 131
Caṇḍiprakāśa, the weapon-spear of the Aṭala Ākhāḍā 119
Cāndrāyaṇa, the vow of, 84, 168
Cāṅgadeva, 150
Caraṇadāsa, 226, 227
Caraṇadāsis, 30, 226 ff
Caraṇatīrtha, 217, 218
Cārumatī, 45
Catuh-sampradāya, 170, 172, 173, 175, 179, 180, 182, 191, 201, 207, 211, 219, 222.
Caturnātha, 189.
Caukā and Ārti, the Kabirapanthi rite of, 217, 218.
Celibacy, see Brahmacarya.
Chakalā, see Dhāmi sect.
Chakra-tīrtha, on the Godavari, 202
Chanda Bardai, 113.
Chapekar L. N., 83, 86, 91, 127, 153, 164, 166, 175, 187, 191, 192, 202, 204, 211, 216, 228, 233, 235.
Chatterjee Bankimchandra, 77.
Chaturvedi parashuram, 215, 225, 232.
Chhatisgaḍi, the Kabirapanthi branch of, see Dharamdāsi.
Chhatrasāl Bundela, 72, 77, 221, 222.
Chhorā, see Yatrī.
Chimnaji Appa, 77.

Chitaldurg, the Lingayat centre at, 238.
Christ Jesus, 220.
Christian asceticism, 7, 10;—inspired by Buddhist asceticism, 10;—protest of Protestant reformation against, 10; - and universities, 8.
Christian Missionaries, 122, 123.
Cidānanda, 245.
Cowell, E. B. 148.
Crooke, W. 87.
Crusades, 9.

Dādu, 223, 224;—and Hindu-Muslim Unity, 223.
Dādūpantha, 160, 215, 222ff., 229; - garments, 224, 225; Nathapanthi influence on, 225.
Dalicā, a Jogi ākhāḍā, 155, 157.
Damielou, 21
Dāmodara Sarasvati, 241.
Dandin, 46, 51, 131, 156.
Dandīs, 79, 81, 85, 87, 98;-as Ekadanḍī, 80.
Dante, the Italian philosopher, 64
Dariyā Sāheb, 229, 230.
Darśana, the flat ear-ring of the Jogi, 152.
Dasanāmis, 63, 76, 79ff., 89, 91, 94, 96ff., 103, 106ff., 114ff., 118ff., 122, 123, 128, 129, 155, 161, 162, 241, 242, 254, 258;-fasts and festivals of, 108;-Śūdra recruits to, 160;-tutelary deities of, 98.
Daśaratha 66, 223, 230.
Dāsya, servitude in 'Bhakti', 198
Dattātreya, 4, 38, 39, 83, 86, 91, 116, 117, 128, 239, 241, 242, 244, 247;-the cult of, 90;-as Shah Datta, 247.

Dāvā, an ākhāḍā sub-division of the Dasanāmi Nāgās, 119.
Dayābāi, 227.
Dayāludāsa, Swāmi, 234.
Dayānanda Anglo-Vedic College, 259.
Dayānanda Sarasvatī, Swāmi, 93, 258ff.
Dayārāmadāsa, the Mahant of the Khāki Ākhāḍā at Chitrakut, 202.
De, S.K., 173, 178, 180, 182, 184, 198, 202, 219, 245.
Devala, 34.
Devasomā, the Kapāli, 132.
Devesūṣi, 22.
Deva temples, 48, 49.
Devaśvara, 177.
Dhāmī sect, 77, 221, 222;–book-cum-foot-print worship of 222;—fasts and festivals, 221, 222;—female ascetics, 222;—Hindu and Muslim followers of, 221 ;- tutelary deity of, 221.
Dhanauti, the Kabirapanthi branch at, 215, 216.
Dharma, the hunter - butcher, 3.
Dharma, three factors of, 19, 28.
Dharamdāsi, the Kabirapanthi branch of Chhatisgad, 215 ff.
Dharmadhvaja, the banner of the Nirmalas, 168.
Dharma Sangha, 254.
Dhaumya, 35, 36, 44.
Dheḍs, 151.
Dhruvakshetra, the Nimbārki monastic centre at, 174.
Dhumapa, a kind of ascetic, 37.
Dhuni, 155, 156 ;—Pai-Dhuni, 156;—of the Udāsis, 162.
Dhuriā Digambara Ākhāḍā of Vaishnavas, 203, 205, 207; -origin of the term, 206.

Dhyāna, 23, 47
Digambaras, 41, 45, 86, 106, 110, 137
Digambara Ākhāḍā of Vaishnavas, 203ff,;- etymology of the name, 205;-Rāma-Digambara, 205, 207;-Śyāma-Digambara, 205, 207
Digambara Ani, 203, 205, 207, 209, 210;-its banner, 208
Digambara Siddhāntā, presentation of Jain doctrine as, 138
Digvijaynātha, Mahant, 158, 265
Diogenes, 46
Dīrghajatā, 45
Divinity, 230;-as Absolute Brahman, 212;-its female consort, 213;-its pantheistic view, 212
Dualism, 178
Dualistic Vedanta, 62, 253
Duality-non-duality, 61, 171, 185
Durgā, goddess, 160
Durvāsa, 38
Dwārā, a division of Nāgā Bairagis, 175, 177, 186, 188, 190, 191, 207, 225

Ecstasy, 17, 18, 42
Ekadaṇḍī, 145
Ekalinga at Udaipur, 113
Ekavrātya, - as Mahādeva and Iśānā, 19;-as Iśānā, 21, 36
Eknātha, 40, 239, 240, 245
Elephanta, the temple of, 135

Farquhar, J. N., 73, 80, 86, 89, 113, 114, 127, 129, 258, 263
Female ascetics, 43, 87, 105, 117, 131, 151, 159, 160, 163, 167, 178, 186, 196, 215 218, 221, 224, 227, 233, 235, 236, 239, 249, 252, 256, 262
Flinders-Petrie, 10
Friars, order of, 8, 9

Gaganaśiva, 56
Gahinīnātha, 64
Gaibīnātha, 64
Galatā, the conference of Vaishnava ascetics at, 173, 180, 202, 203, 264
Galatā, the Ramanandi centre at, 189, 190, 196, 199
Gaṇapati, 105, 119, 160
Gangādhara Sarasvati, 241
Gaṅgeśvarānanda Swāmi, of Vrindavan, 84
Garāgīr, 130
Garbhaganjī, the drum of the Digambara Ani, 209
Gārgī Vācaknavī, 21, 31
Gargya. 36
Garibadāsa, 233, 234
Garibadāsi sect, 215, 233;-centres of, 234
Gauḍpāda, 89
Gaud Ramadas, 215
Gaudīya Maṭha, at Calcutta, 187
Gaudīya Mission, 185 ff., 253, 258;—its non-Hindu and European Sadhus, 187.
General elections, in India, 194, 265.
Gheraṇḍa, 150.
Ghiyasuddin Taghluk, 65.
Ghuṣṭānna, the forbidden food, 257.
Giri, a Dasanāmi order, 92ff., 96, 114, 115, 119, 247, 248.
Goloka, 185.
Gomateśvara, the idol at Shravanabelagola of, 110.
Gopālabhaṭṭa, Goswami, 183, 184. 219.
Gopāla Caitanya, 244.
Gorakhnātha, 59, 60, 64, 65, 121, 145, 146, 148 ff., 156, 159; —and Islam, 60; the temple of, 157.
Gorakhnāthis, see Jogis.

Gosāis, 79, 113, 126; see also Samnyāsis.
Gosāla Makkhaliputta, 32, 41
Gotra of the Dasanāmis, 96
Govardhana Maṭha, 96 ff.
Govind III, the Rāṣṭrakūta king, 55
Govinda, 246
Govindapādācārya, 89
Govindaprabhu, 239
Govindsingh, Guru, 166
Grierson, G. A., 121, 122
Gūdaḍs, 120 ff.
Gulābadāsa, Mahanta, 228
Gurūkā Bāgh, the agitation of, 260.
Gurukul Kangri, 44, 260, 261
Gyāngīr Gosāvī, 114

Hamsa, one of the four ascetic stages, 33, 82 ff., 145
Hamsa Avadhūta, 87
Hamsa Kabir, see Kabir Paramahamsa
Hanumāna, the monkey-god, 128, 206, 208
Harbuji Sankhla, 70, 71
Haridāsa, 184
Harirāmadāsa, 229
Harivyāsadeva, 174, 204
Harivyāsis, see Nimbārkis
Hariyānanda, 188
Hastāmalaka, 95, 99
Haṭhayoga, 24, 36, 45, 60, 108, 146, 147, 149, 150, 154, 189;- outside the Upaniṣadic tradition, 148
Hinduism, 3, 74, 213, 217, 258;- reconversion to, 261, 264
Hindu Mahāsabhā, 158, 265
Hingalaj, the goddess of, 154, 157
Hita Harivaṁśa, 219, 220
Hiuen Tsang, 6, 47 ff., 54, 59, 131, 141
Hospitallers of St. John, the order of the knights, 9, 10
Huḍadangā, the third stage of a novitiate Vaishnava Nāgā, 210

Idol-worship, 213, 224, 230, 231; opposition to, 212, 214, 217, 218, 221, ff., 230, 239, 257
Ignatius, St., of Loyola, 10
Indian National Congress, 193, 261, 265
Indriyadhāraṇā, 23
Indus Valley Civilization, 15, 16, 25
Intoxication, of a Muni, 17
Iśānaśiva, 56
Islam, challenge of, in the Holy Land, 9; the influence of, 213; and Nāthapantha in Bengal, 155; synthesis with Hinduism, 247
Islamic Fakirs, onslaught on Hinduism of, 74
Iśvaradāsa, 55
Isvara Purī, 94, 180

Jaḍabharata, 38, 83
Jafar Jogis, 60
Jain ascetics, 41, 92, 106, 110, 133, 134, 137 ff., 145, 156.
Jainism, 2, 4, 42, 44, 45, 78, 228, 232, 233
Jālandarnāth, the high priest of, 113
Janārdanaswāmi, 239.
Jangama, the Lingayat ascetic order, 238, 246
Jayamaldāsa, 229, 230
Jesuits or the Society of Jesus, 10
Jhaḍiā Akhādā of the Vaishnavas, 203, 207
Jhithaḍā, the Ramanandi centre at, 190
Jīva Goswāmi, 180, 181, 183

Jivanmuktā, Paṇḍitā, Māi. 105
Jivārām, 198
Jñānā-mārga, the path of knowledge, 215, 234
Jñānanidhi, 84
Jñānasāgarendra Sarasvati, Avadhūta, 242, 243
Jñānavāpi, the battle of, 118
Jñānendra Sarasvati, 76, 241
Jñāneśvara, 63 ff., 79, 89, 150, 159, 177, 185, 239, 241, 243
Jogis and their sect, 39, 60, 64, 78, 79, 84, 87, 101, 113 ff., 117, 120 ff., 128 ff., 133 ff., 142, 145, 147, 151, 152, 154, 157 ff., 162, 189, 190, 199; -in Bengal 155; and Dadupanthis, 225; divisions of, 151; -greetings, 153; initiation, 152 -in the days of Jñāneśvara 150;-names of, 153;-sections of, 159;-and their skull-bowl, 151;-and Upaniṣadic practices, 147
Joshi Maṭha, 96 ff.
Junā Ākhāḍā, 39, 83, 116, 117, 120, 121

Kabir, 84, 161, 168, 169, 213, 214, 218, 219, 222, 223, 233, 247;-his twelve disciples, 215
Kabīrapantha, 160, 168, 214 ff., 222, 224, 249, 257;-branches and sections, 215;-forehead mark, 216;-garments, 216;-greetings, 218;-monastic centres, 216;-names, 216;-necklace-rosary, 216;-and pilgrimages, 215;-the spread of, 215
Kabīra Paramahamsa, 84, 168;-festivals, 168;-greetings, 168;-monastic centres, 168
Kaimdas Mahanta, 207
Kālāmukha sect, 54 ff., 68, 135, 137, 144, 155
Kalanos, 47
Kālaśakti, 55
Kalhaṇa, 57, 58
Kālidāsa, 24, 37, 46, 66
Kālīśa, 143
Kamalānanda, 116
Kanphāṭā Jogis, see Jogis
Kāntānanda, 246
Kapālakuṇḍalā, 136,
Kapāleśvara, 52, 135
Kāpālikas, 47ff., 52ff., 57, 112, 113, 117, 131 132, 134ff., 137ff., 148ff., 155, 156, 159, 172, 189;-and damaru, 139;-as Kapāla Bhikṣus, 148;-as Mahāvratins, 52, 135-as Nara-asthimuṇḍamālādhāraka, 138;-offering blood and flesh to Bhairava, 138, 139
Kapālini, 140
Karapātri Maharaj, 81, 85
Karma-mārga, 215, 234
Kārtikaswāmi, 117
Karuṇāsāgara, 248, 249
Kāśyapa, a gotra of the Dasa nāmi Samnyāsis, 96
Kautilya, 172
Kāyama sect, see Satkaivala sect
Keśava Bhāratī, 94, 180
Keśava Caitanya, 233, 244
Keśava Kāśmirin, 174
Kevalānanda Sarasvati, 243
Khākī, a Dādupanthi section, 224, 225, 230
Khākī Ākhāḍā, 202ff.;-etymology of, 206
Khākīs Rāmānandī, 197
Khālasā Dādupanthi, 225;- Rāmānandi, 194
Kheḍāpā, a Rāmasanehi sub-sect, 228, 229, 231, 233
Khijaḍā, see Dhāmi sect
Kilhadāsa, 199
Kishendeva Baba, 226

Kiśordāsa Pandit, 176
Kīṭawāra, a Dasanāmi section, 97
Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, 9
Kripārāma, 229
Krishna Lord, 65 ff., 73, 146, 149, 168, 175, 179, 198, 199, 205, 220, 221, 232, 235, 236, 239, 240;-as Yogīśvara, 78
Krishna Caitanya, see Chaitanya Mahāprabhu
Krishna Dayārṇava, 246
Krishnadāsa Pavahārī, Sri, 189, 190; 196, 199
Krishnamiśrayati, 112
Krishnānanda, 246
Krishna Sarasvati, 241
Kriyāśakti. 69
Kṛpānanda Swāmi, 263
Kṣapaṇaka, see Jain ascetics
Kṣātrajagatguru of Kolhapur, 248
Kubāji, 190
Kuberasāheb sect, see Satkaiwala sect
Kukaḍs, 121
Kumāravrata, 45
Kumbha meḷā, 91, 107, 111, 119, 120, 122, 124, 125, 158, 164, 167, 169, 173, 179, 181ff., 202, 203, 208, 215, 222, 239, 240, 265;-and the struggle between Dewas and Daityas, 181
Kuṅḍalini, 146, 230
Kung Fu-tze, 6
Kurukshetra, the sacred lake of, 107
Kuṭīcaka, one of the four ascetic stages, 33

Lakṣmaṇa, 67
Lakṣmaṇabhaṭṭa, the father of Vallabha, 177
Lakshmāṇagiri Mahanta, 116
Lāl Pādris, 101
Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa, 178
Lao-tze, 6
Lingayats, 47, 155, 238, 239, 253;-centres 238
Lokāyatas, 41

Mādhava Puri alias Mādhavendra, 93, 94, 184, 185
Mādhava Vidyāraṇya, 68, 69, 93, 98, 113, 129, 143, 243, 259
Mādhavadāsa, 242
Mādhava Sarasvati, 241
Maḍhī, 119
Madhusūdana Sarasvati, 72 ff., 93, 113 ff., 240, 241, 256
Madhva-Ānandatīrtha, 62, 67, 93, 144, 155, 171, 173, 178ff., 185
Mādhva sect, 74, 80, 93, 178ff., 185, 207, 208, 222, 253, 254;-necklace rosary, 186;-tutelary diety, 178.
Mādhva Gauḍiya sect, 179 ff., 183ff., 197, 198, 219, 220, 230, 242, 244, 245, 253, 254, 265;-fasts and festivals, 186;-female asceties, 186;-Mādhva affiliation of, 181, 202; -monastic centres, 186;-names, 186,-necklace rosary, 185,-Parivāras, 186,-tilak-mark, 186,-tutelary deity, 171
Mādhva-Gauḍeśvaras, see Mādhva Gauḍiyas.
Mahā-atīta, the final stage of a Vaishnava Nāgā, 210.
Mahābhairava, 138ff.
Mahābhairavī, the wife of Bharga, 139
Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara, 124
Mahānirvāṇī Ākhāḍā of the Saivā Samnyāsis, 116, 118, 119, 121, 123, 206

Mahānirvāṇi Ākhāḍā of the Vaishnavas, 203, 206,-etymology of, 206
Mahanta, the installation of, 211
Mahānubhāva sect, 60, 239, 240,-female asceties, 239,-garments, 240,- literature, 159
Mahārājapantha, see Dhāmī sect
Mahāsiddhi, the eight great achievements, 141
Mahātmā sect, see Nahānubhāva
Mahavratins, see Kapālikas
Mahāvīra, Vardhamāna, 2, 4, 25, 31, 32, 40, 41
Maheśvarānanda Swāmi. of Hardwar, 84
Māī Śākhā of the Kabirpanthis, 215
Mālādhārī Ākhāḍā of the Vaishnavas, 203, 207
Malkānā Rajputs, reclaimation of, 193, 261
Manabhāva sect, see Mahānubhāva sect.
Maṇḍaleśvara, 123, 124
Manmohandas. Mahanta of Dargah Pir Rattan Nātha, 155
Manu, 28, 35, 79, 80, 111, 148, 257
Masāṇanātha, Pīr, 157
Matsyendranātha, 145, 148
Mauni, an ascetic with a vow of silence, 38
Mauni, a variety of Rāmasanehi ascetics, 229
Maunibava, 247, 248
Māyāvādīs, see Saiva Samnyāsis
Menuhin, 256
Merājapantha, see Dhāmī sect
Merudevī, 32
Monastic centres,-income, 251;-of Jogis, 156;-life at, 250, 258; philanthropic activity, 257; of Vaishnava Nāgās, 203, 205, 210
Monastic organiz ation, 1, 5, 6, 26
Monism, pure, 177.
Monistic-pluralistic theory of Vedanta, 171
Monistic Vedanta. 61, 64, 65, 72, 73, 98, 100, 113, 128, 137, 141, 161, 167, 170, 171, 213, 214, 223ff., 253, 255
Mudrī-Darśana, the philosophy of Jogis, 153
Muktābāi, 159
Mūlādhāra, the mysticál circle in the body, 147
Muni, 12, 15ff., 27, 133
Munśirāma Mahatma, see Śraddhananda Swami
Muraithiyā, the fourth stage of a novitiate Vaishnava Nāgā, 210
Muslims, addmission to ascetc sects, 160, 257
Nābhāji, 177
Naciketas, 3, 28, 34, 35
Nāda-Brahma, a yogic attainment, 147, 214
Nādīs, 22 146ff.
Nāgās, Saiva, 81, 87, 91, 106, 111, 116, 117, 119ff., 153, 160; -addmission to Sūdras, 104, 256
Nāgās Vaishnava, 210, 211, 254; Catuh-sampradāyī, 201, 203, 207; – Dadupanthi, 222, 224 ff.,-initiation, 210; Nimbārkī, 204, Rāmānandī, 189, 191, 194, 195, 204, 206, 248
Nairana, the Dadupanthi centre at, 223, 224
Naked ascetics, the sect of, 110, 111
Nāmdeva, 177
Nāmadevī centre at Ghoman, 177
Nānak, 160 ff., 166, 214

Nānakpanthis, 160, 215; see also Sikhs
Nānakputras, see Udasis
Nārada, 4, 23, 30, 31, 89, 163, 174
Narahari Tirtha, 67
Nārāyaṇadāsa, Baba, 248
Nārāyaṇaguru Swami, 253, 254
Nārāyaṇamuni, see Swāminārāyaṇa
Narmadā, circumambulation of, 154
Nāthamuni, 172
Nāthapanthis, see Jogis
Navakalyāṇa, the Lingayat centre at Dharwar, 238
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 265
Nijānanda Swami, 221, 222, 245
Nimāvats, see Nimbārkis.
Nimbārka, 61, 62, 64, 65, 67, 171, 173, 174, 176, 179. 204, 239
Nimbārkīs, 30, 62, 171, 178 ff., 202 ff., 216;–fasts and festivals, 175 ;–garment, 175 ;–greetings, 175;–monastic centres, 175 ;–names, 175; – necklace-rosary, 175; - tutelary deity, 171, 174
Nirabhāris, see Virakta Lingayats
Nirālambī, Ākhāḍā of the Vaishnavas, 203;--etymology, 206;--Harivyāsī, 208 ;-- Rāmānandi, 208
Niranjani Ākhāḍā, 117, 121
Nirgrantha, 41, 48, 49
Nirikāri sect, 248
Nirmalas, 160, 165; – Ākhāḍās, 167,168;-fasts and festivals,168, greetings, 167;-initiation, 166;-monastic centres, 161; - Nāgā section, 161;-Names, 166;-Pancāyati Ākhāḍā, 167, 168;-Paramahamsas, 161;-Ramata Ākhāḍā, 167
Nirmalānanda Paramahamsa, see Ātmārāma Paramahamsa.
Nirmohi Ākhāḍā of the Vaishnavas, 203, 206;-Harivyāsī, 207;-Rāmānandi, 207
Nirmohi ani, 203, 207, 209, 210;-its banner, 208
Nirvāṇī Ākhāḍā of the Vaishnavas, 203, 206;-etymology, 206; -Harivyāsī, 204, 208;-Rāmānandi, 204, 207, 248
Nirvāṇi ani, 203, 207, 209, 210 ; -its banner, 208
Nishchaldāsa, 225, 226
Nityānanda, 94; - incarnation of Balarāma, 184;-a 'tantric' ascetic, 184
Niveditā, sister, 105, 263
Nivṛttināth, 64, 149
Niyama, an aṅga of Yoga, 147
Nṛsimha Giri, 94
Nṛsimha Sarasvati, 241, 247

Oghar, see Aughar
Oman J. C., 81, 86, 90, 105, 197, 255
Onesicrytus. 46

Pāda, a Jogi section, 156
Padmapāda, 95, 99
Pāḷes, a Swāminārāyaṇa division, 237
Pancāgni-tapa, a kind of austerity and of ascetics, 37, 45, 122
Pancāyata of Rāmānandis, 195, 200
Pancāyatana, 178, 236
Pandharpur, the Rāmānandi centre at, 192
Parabrahma Sampradāya, see Dādupantha
Paramahamsa, 32ff., 38, 39, 47, 59, 76, 79, 81, 83ff., 93, 102, 103, 108, 123, 145, 160, 161, 247;-the supreme discriminator, 82

Paramānanda, 246, 258
Pārameśvara, Kapālika's doctrine called as, 140
Parashuramapuri, the Nimbārki centre at, 175, 176
Parawānā of Kabirpanthis, 218
Parivāras, Gaudīya, 186
Parivrājaka, 43, 45, 79
Parliament of Religions, at Chicago, 263
Pārśva, 41
Parvata, a Dasanāmī order, 92, 94, 96, 119
Pārvatī, 78, 117, 139;-as Udonātha, 145
Pāśupata sect, 14, 47ff., 52, 53, 55, 129, 131, 132, 135
Pāśupata Yoga, 129, 130
Paśupatinātha at Khatmandu, 45
Pattadadevaru, 238
Peacock feathers, 138, 156. 233
Philosophy, six systems of, 144
Phulḍola, a Ramasanehi festival, 231
Pinddadankha, the Rāmānandi centre at, 192
Pindori, the Rāmānandi eentre at, 188, 189
Pingalā nāḍī, 146
Pīra, a Jogi mahanta, 60, 157, 158
Prabhudatta Brahmacārī, 265
Prabodhānanda, 219
Prajñānanda Sarasvati, 243
Prakāśa Brahmacārī, 96
Prahlāda, 40, 231
Pramadakaṇṭha, 57, 58
Prāṇanātha, 72, 77, 221, 222, 265
Prāṇanāthi, sect, see Dhāmī sect
Prāṇāyāma, the six practices of, 147
Premaji, 229
Puṇyaśālā, 50
Pure Dualism, 255
Puri, a Dasanāmi order, 92 ff., 114, 115, 119
Pūrṇānanda, 245
Purushottama Sarasvati, 241
Purushottama Tīrtha, 62, 178
Puṣṭi-mārga, of Vallabha, 178
Pyāremohandāsa, 187

Qualified dualism, 188, 235
Qualified monism, 61

Rādhā - Krishna, 61, 171, 174, 184ff., 199, 201, 227; - cult. 67, 228, 232; - the first teacher to instal, 65
Rādhāmohanadāsa, Mahanta of Nasik, 202, 204
Radhaswāmī sect, 214
Rādhāvallabhī Ākhāḍā of the Vaishnavas, 203, 207
Rādhāvallabhīs, 180, 183, 219, 220, 222;-Dwārā of the name, 186;-fasts, 219;-Nāgās, 220
Rāghava Caitanya, 244
Rāghavānanda, Rāmānanda's teacher, 63, 188
Raghunāthabhatta Goswāmī, 183
Raghunathadāsa Goswāmī, 183
Raghunāthadāsa Rāmānandi, 191
Raghuvīraprasāda, 190, 191
Rājayoga, 146
Rajjab, 223
Rāmā, 3, 37, 38, 65, 66, 73, 74, 99, 159, 170, 188, 195ff., 201, 205, 210, 223, 228, 230;-cult, 67;-Digvijayā, 67;-identity with Rahım of, 160
Rāmacaraṇa, 229, 230
Rāmadāsa, 74ff., 116, 201, 221, 242, 245, 258, 259, 265;-his monastic centres, 247
Rāmadāsī sect, 74, 242
Rāmakrishṇa Paramahamsa 42, 84, 93, 253, 255, 256, 259, 261, 262

Rāmakrishṇānanda Giri, 181
Rāmakrishna mission, 186, 253, 254, 257, 262ff.
Ramaṇa Maharshi, 256
Rāmānanda, the spiritual teacher of Swaminārāyaṇa, 235;-incarnation of Uddhava, 235
Rāmānanda, 57, 63, 65ff., 69, 70, 72, 73, 173, 188, 194, 196, 204, 205, 212ff., 240, 256
Rāmānanda, Swāmi Samnyāsi, 87,
Rāmānanda Tirtha, 265
Rāmānandīs, 87, 156, 171, 173, 183, 187, 188, 190ff., 196, 198, 199, 201, 203, ff., 208, 212, 248, 258;-admission of Śūdras, 194;- Ākhāḍamallas, 194, 195, 201; - fasts and festivals, 197; - female ascetics, 196;-garment, 196; - greeting, 196; - initiation, 194, 195; - Khālsā, 194; - mudrā, 195; - names 196; - sacred formula, 195; - sthānadhāris, 194;-tutelary deity, 170
Rāmānujācārya, 55, 60 ff., 72, 79, 137, 144, 155, 170, 172, 173, 176, 188, 205
Rāmānuji sect, 65, 73, 173, 182, 183, 188, 195, 196, 212, 234, 240, 253; - centres, 235; -tutelary deity 170
Rāmaprasāda, 190
Rāmarājya Pariṣad, 85, 193, 194
Rāmasanehis, 156, 215, 223, 228ff., 235;-centres, 233;-festivals, 231; -garments, 228, 230;-greetings, 233;-names, 228;-necklace rosary, 229;-tutelary deity, 228
Ramata Ākhāḍā, Vaishnava, 203
Rāma Tīrtha, 94
Rāmāvats, see Rāmānandis
Rāmeśvarabhaṭṭa, 240, 241
Ram Mohan Roy, Raja, 258, 261
Ranganatha Mogarekar, 245
Ranganāthaswāmi Nigadikar, 245
Rasa, the theory of, 219, 230;- identification with Brahma, 220
Rasika, a branch of Rāmānandis 199
Rasika, a section of Rādhāvallabhis, 183, 220
Ratnadāsa, the Mahanta of the Kabiramandir of Ahmedabad, 216
Reṇa, a Ramasanehi sub-sect, 228, 229, 231, 233
Rewasa, a Rāmānandi centre at, 190
Romain Rolland, 256
Ṛṣabha, 2, 32, 33, 38
Rudra Sampradāya, 177, 178, 207
Rudra - Śiva, 132
Rukhads, 120, 121
Rūpa Goswāmi 180, 183, 219, 220

Sadābart, 71
Sadānanda Paramahamsa, 247
Sādhubela, the Udasi centre at Sukkur, 164, 165
Sādhus, a Swāminārāyaṇa division, 237
Sadhuism, see asceticism
Sāgara, a Dasanāmi order, 92, 95, 96, 119.
Sahajadhārī, among Nirmalas, 166
Sahaja-Marga, of the Kabirapanthis, 223
Sahajānanda, 245
Sahajobāī, 227, 228
Śaivas, 132, 209, 241, 246
Śaiva Samnyāsis, 78 ff, 83, 86, 87, 89, 90, 92, 98, 101, 105, 107, 115, 126, 151, 153, 160 ff., 168 ff., 189, 197, 202, 203, 206, 212, 228, 238, 239, 241, 247, 254, 256, 264, 265; - initiation, 104 ff.

– sect - mark, 170;-as Smārtas, 161;
– and Śūdras, 114, 115, 122; - struggle with Vaishnavas, 193, 208; - tantric, 129; Vedantic, 129.
Śaivism, 81, 144
Śāktas, 132
Sakhya, the friendly attitude of Bhakti, 198, 199
Sambhājī, 248
Śambūka, the Śūdra ascetic, 37
Samnyāsa, 25, 45, 53, 54, 78
Saṁvartaka, 83
Sanaka or Sanaga, 30, 31, 89, 162 173, 174
Sanaka Sampradāya, see Nimbarkis
Sanandana. 30, 89, 163
Sanātana, 30, 31, 163, 173
Sanātana Goswāmi, 183
Sanātana Sampradāya, see Nimbarkis
Sanatkumāra, 4, 23, 30, 31, 52, 89, 103, 163
Sanatsujāta, 30. 31, 89
Śāṇḍilī, 32
Śāṇḍilya, 36
Sangam dynasty of Vijayanagar, 68, 69
Sangha, Buddhist, 42 ff., 154
Śankarācārya, 6, 52 ff., 59, 60, 62 ff., 82, 84, 89, 90, 92, 93, 95 ff., 105, 113, 118, 128, 142ff. 160, 165, 170, 172, 181, 185, 255; - Vaishnava reaction to, 61
Sānkhya system of philosophy 139, 178
Śānta, the blissfulness in Bhakti, 198
Santāna sect, 77
Santoṣī Ākhāḍā of the Vaishnavas, 203;-Harivyāsī, 204, 207;-Rāmānandi, 204, 207
Śarabhaṅga, 37
Śāradā Maṭha, 96ff.
Sarasvati, a Dasanāmi order, 81, 92ff., 98, 119, 241ff., 258
Śarat Giri, 94
Sarjudāsa Baba, 248
Sarveśvaraśakti, 56
Satkaivala sect, 248, 249
Satyāmalanātha, 64
Sāyaṇācārya, 12ff.
Scheduled castes, 176, 193, 194;- entry into Hindu temples, 237;- recruitment to ascetic orders, 212, 256
Sen Keśavacandra, 259
Sen Kshitimohan, 177, 244
Shah Datta, 247
Shāhapurā, a Rāmasanehi subsect, 228, 229, 231, 233
Shivaji, 75, 246, 247
Shivāji Caitanya, 242
Siddhānanda, 246
Sikhs, 166, 167, 214, 229
Sikh ascetics, 125
Sīta Pādrīs, 101, 171
Sitārāmaśāstrī, Mahanta, 193, 211
Śiva, 39, 160, 197, 246; – as Adinātha, founder of the Jogi sect, 145; - as Bhairava, 116, 117, 136, 139; - as Kālāgni - Rudra, 102, 103; - as Kapālin, 130, 131;-as Lakulīśa, 14;-as Mahāyogī, 78, 129, 135; - as Maheśvara,49,50,52,131,132;- as Nilakaṅṭha, 133; - as Parameśvara, 133;-and Pārvatī, 139;-as Paśupati, 16; - phallic emblem of, 102;-Rudrabhāga, an aspect of 134;-with split ears, 142;-as Trilocana, 133; - as a tyāgī, 78
Śiva-Linga, worship of, 144
Śiva Avadhūta, 87
Śiva-Bhāgavata, 47, 111

Śiva Caitanya, 242, 244, 245
Śivānandaswāmī, Shivaji's spritual teaeher
Śivānanda Swāmi, Paramahamsa of Hrishikesh, 84, 103
Śivarāmaswāmī, 245
Śiva-Yogis, 136
Skanda, 187, 321;-temple of, 117
Śraddhā Kapālini, 139ff.
Śraddhānanda Swāmi, 193, 259ff. 265
Śramaṇas, 45
Śrī Bhaṭṭa, 174
Śrīcandra, the founder of the Udāsis sect, 162, 164, 165
Śrīdhara, the great Marathi polymath, 246
Śrī Harṣa, 83
Śrī Krishna Praṇāmī sect, see Dhāmī sect
Śrī Śaila, a Kapālika centre, 135, 143
Śrī Sampradāya, 188, 204
Śrī Viśva-Vaishnava Rājasabhā, see Gauḍīya mission
Śṛṅgāra, the erotic attitude of Bhakti, 198
Śṛṅgeri Maṭha, 68, 69, 96ff., 243
Sthānadhārī Ramanandis, 194
Stoicism, 11
Strabo, 46
Sudarśana Sampradāya, see Nimbārkis
Śuddhī and Sanghaṭana movement, 261
Śūdras, recruitment to ascetic orders of, 256
Śuka, 227
Śuka Sampradāya, see Caraṇadāsīs
Śuka - Sanaka, 30
Sukhaḍs, 120 ff,
Śukhadevadāsa, 227
Śunderdāsa, 226
Surasurānanda, 116
Surata - Gopāla, the Kabirapanthi branch, 215, 217
Surata - Śabda - Yoga, 214
Sureśvarācārya, 56, 95, 99
Suṣumnā nāḍī, 23, 147
Sutīkṣṇa, 37, 38
Sutīkṣṇa Muni Udāsīn, Swāmi, 165
Suvarcalā, 34
Svasukhī, a branch of Ramanandis, 198
Śvetaketu, Āruṇeya, 2, 3, 33, 34, 38, 83
Śvetāmbaras, 41
Swāminārāyaṇa, 234, 235; - Khoja disciples of, 235
Swāminārāyaṇa sect, 234; - Acāryas, 235, 237; - centres, 237; - fasts and festivals, 236;
- female ascetics, 235;-garments, 237;- initiation, 236; - kinds of ascetics, 236; - temples, 236;- tutelary deity, 236
Swarūpa Brahmacāri, 96

Tairthikas, 141
Taṅgatoḍā, 106
Tantra, the doctrine of, 146
Tantric ascetics, 184
Tantric Buddhism, 148
Tantric teachers, 148
Tantric works, 150
Tapas, 19, 21, 29, 37, 58, 129
Tāpasī, 46
Tāpasī, a branch of Rāmānandis, 199
Tarka, an aṅga of Yoga, 147
Tāṭambari Ākhāḍā of the Vaishnavas, 203, 208
Templars, the Knights, 9, 10
Temple-Colleges, 54, 55;-of Trayipurusha, 55;-of Koḍiyamaṭha, 56

Temple Entry Act, 237
Thambā, a Dādupanthī division, 225
Thera, 43
Theri, 43
Tīrtha, a Dasanāmī order, 81, 92, 93, 95, 96, 98, 178, 179
Tirthika, 45, 50
Tod Col., 70, 71, 88, 113, 114, 207, 226
Toṭaka, 95, 99
Toṭāpuri, 262
Traidaṇḍika, 45
Trailokya Hari, Swami, 166
Tridaṇḍī, the Vaishnava School of asceticism, 60, 62, 80, 145, 186, 188
Trikuti, 230
Trilocana, 177
Triphala, see Urdhva - puṇḍra
Tripuṇdra, the sacred mark, 102, 161.
Tripura, 103
Tukaram, 65, 74, 75, 77, 233,244, 245
Tulādhāra, the Vaiśya, 3
Tulasi Caitanya, 244
Tulasīdāsa, 66, 67, 73
Turu Giri, 248
Tyāgī, a Rāmasanehi sub-sect, see Shāhapurā

Udāsīs, 160 ff., 217;
Uddālaka Āruṇi, 33 ff., 38
Uddhavīpantha, see Swāminārāyaṇa sect.
Ude, of the Jogi school, 145
Udonatha, see Parvati.
Ukhaḍs, 120, 121
Ukhaḷa Ākhāḍā of the Vaishnavas, 203, 207
Umā Haimavatī, 78, 132, 133
Universities, 44
Unmattabhairava, 143
Untouchable classes, see scheduled castes
Ūrdhvabāhu, 38
Ūrdhva-puṇḍra, the tilak-mark of the Bairāgis, 172
Uttarāḍhi, a Dādūpanthī section, 225

Vaḍavā-Prātitheyi, 32
Vāghanagari, Ramanandi centre at, 192.
Vāgho Caitanya, 242
Vaikhānasas, 15
Vaikuṇṭhānanda, 246
Vaishnavas, 209, 253ff.;-of Bengal, 220, 244
Vaishnava ascetics, see Bairāgis
Vaishnavism, 53, 57, 73, 78, 81, 84, 144, 179
Vaishnava University at Vrindavan, 187, 265
Vallabhācārīs, 178, 227, 232, 234, 235
Vallabhācārya, 177ff., 182, 198, 255
Vālmiki, 44, 67
Vāmacāris, Saiva, 184
Vāmadeva, 51
Vana, a Dasanāmi order, 92, 95, 96, 119
Vānaprastha, 14, 44
Varāhamihira, 66
Vārakarī sect, 64, 225
Vardhaman, the Nimbārki centre at, 175
Varerkar, B. V. alias Māmā, 261
Varṇāśramadharma, 2
Varuṇa, 20
Vasiṣṭha, 198
Vastradhārī, 106
Vāsudeva cult, 53
Vāsudevācārya Brahmacāri, 193
Vāsudevānanda, 246
Vātaraśana, 13, 14

Vātsalya, the parental attitude of Bhakti, 198
Vedānta, 246, 258
Vidyākuṇḍa Sthāna, a Rāmānandī centre, 191
Vidyānanda Swāmi of Ahmedabad, 84
Vidyātīrtha, the pontiff of Śṛṅgeri 68, 69
Vihāra, Būddhist, 6, 43
Vijñāna, 23
Vijñāneśvara, the jurist, 59, 61,62
Vimalādevi, 159
Vināyaka, 132
Virajā sacrifice, 106
Virakta, Hindi periodical, 193
Virakta, Lingayats, 238
Virakta - Maha - Maṇḍal, 193
Viraktas, a Dādupanthi section, 224, 225
Vīraśaiva sect, see Lingayat sect
Viraśaivism, 144
Viśeṣas, Lingayat, 238
Vishṇu, 99, 132, 160, 170, 174, 178;-devotion to, 137, 142;-as Hamsa, 173;-incarnation of, 3, 4, 40, 61, 65, 66, 83, 98, 231;-with Lakshmi, 61;-as personal god, 61
Vishṇuswāmi, 65, 67, 72, 177, 182, 255
Vishnuswāmi Ākhāḍā of the Vaishnavas, 203, 206, 207
Vishnuswāmi ascetics, 171, 174, 176;-tutelary deities, 171
Vistaradhāris, a Dadupanthi section, 224
Viśveśvara Sarasvati, 72
Viṭhṭhalapanta, the father of Jñāneśvara, 63
Viṭhṭhala-Rakhumāi of Pandharpur, 65, 177
Vivekānanda Swāmi, 84, 93, 105, 163. 225, 253, 261ff.
Vows, ascetic, 45
Vrātyas, 15, 130
Vrindāvanadevaji, 172, 203
Vyāsa, 181

Yajna, 19
Yājnavalkya, 21, 26, 27, 28, 31, 33
Yama, an aṅga of Yoga, 147
Yamunācārya, 172
Yatis, 12, 15, 16, 17, 30, 58, 79
Yātri, the first stage of a novitiate Vaishnava Nāgā 210
Yoga, 18, 21, 23, 24, 29, 47, 53, 60, 95, 108, 128, 132, 133, 138, 144—150, 154, 158, 167, 168, 189, 199, 200, 212, 214, 216, 223, 224, 230, 234, 246, 250, 255, 256, 262
Yogapracāriṇī-Sabhā, 158
Yogins-Shamans or medicine men, 17
Yogis (see Jogis).

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2. Śrī Sampradāya (Rāmānandi)	x	,,	Dhuriyā	x	Khāki	,,	,,	,,	,,	x	x	,,	Tāṭambari	x
3. Rudra Sampradāya (Viṣṇu svāmi)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Viṣṇu svāmi
4. Bhrama Sampradāya (Mādhva Gauḍiya)	Balabhadri	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Rādhāvallabhi	x	x	x

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